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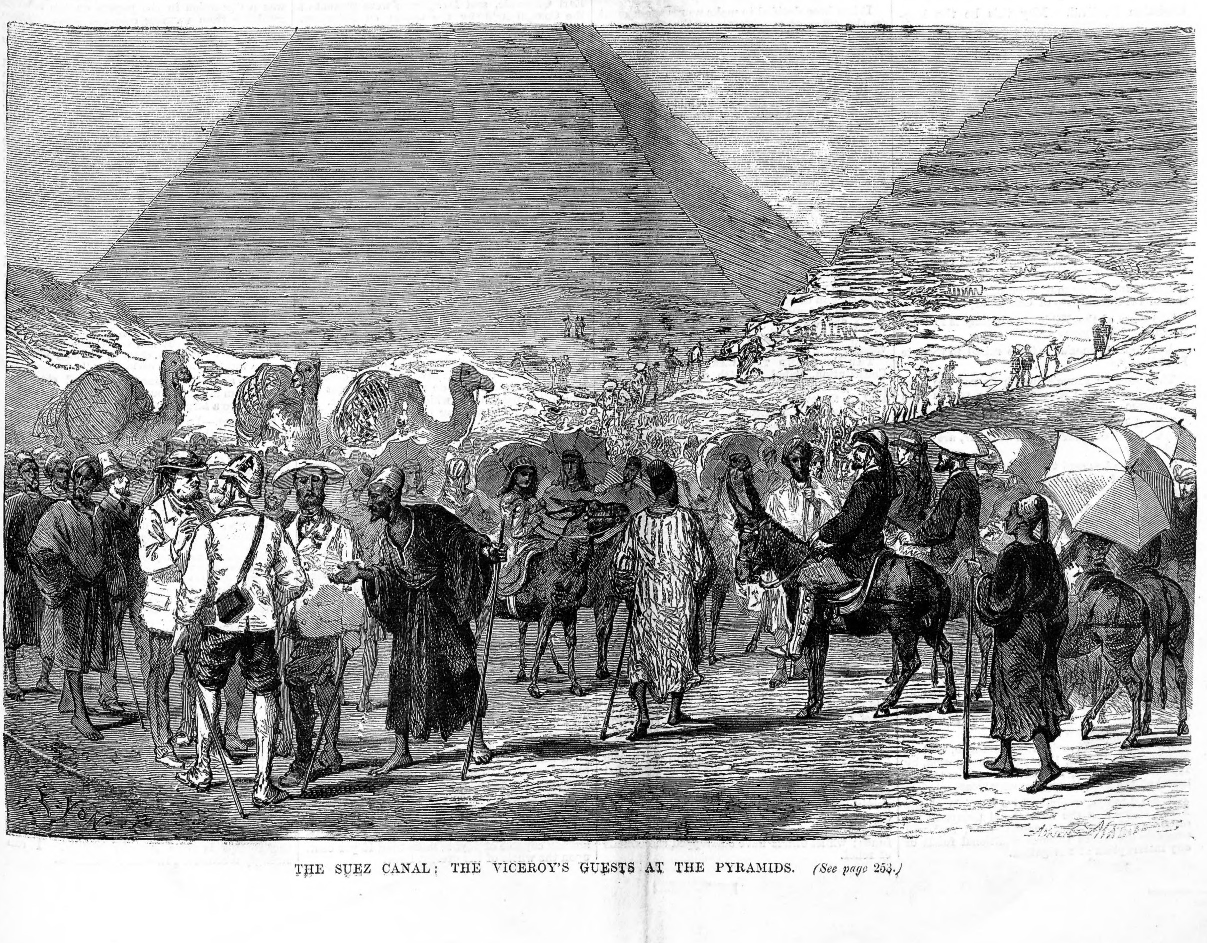
CHRISTMAS.

> "At Christmas play, and make good cheer,
> For Christmas comes but once a year."

A good old couplet, time-worn and familiar, we commend it to our readers. Play and make good cheer. Lay aside the ledger and the cashbook. Fold up your prospectuses of new schemes. Lay down pen and pencil, and welcome the coming guest. Down with your troubles and cares, banish them with a brave and hopeful heart, the Christmas bells ring out glad tidings of great joy. Never mind that you are not so rich as you ought to be, and as you want to be, at the close of this year. Never mind that you have suffered from ingratitude, that they whom you have befriended have fallen away from you. This is the season for play, and all the best associations of the time call upon you to be happy. The mind needs rest, the brain has more than done its work, the hands that have laboured through the long long year are entitled to an idle time. This is the season. Christmas is with us again. He is our honoured guest. Our brethren all over the world are welcoming him. Bands of children rejoice at his coming. Friends give friends heartier greetings than during all the other months of the year. The holly and the mistletoe are on the walls again, with their train of happy memories. Come, gentlemen all, and ladies, too; come children, boys and girls, and friends every one, pay tribute to the time. Rejoice and make good cheer; for Christmas comes but once a year!

It is all very well, we fancy we hear some poor half-starved wretch say, crouching beneath the shadow of the dark side of Birmingham; it is all very well, we hear some poor creature in a Black Country hovel gasp out between the chill gusts of the winter wind; it is all very well to ring "the merry merry bells of Yule" in our ears, and demand joy and laughter. The thought is a keen pang. It is like a cry from the miserable and wretched. But we have an antidote in the knowledge of the innate goodness of humanity. The hardest heart softens on December 24, the most miserly feel something of the genial influence of the time, the generous are ten times more liberal at Christmas. Lazarus is cared for now, wherever he be. It is one of the most gratifying features of the great Festival, the Practical Benevolence of the season. Gifts of coals and clothes, of meats and groceries, and little luxuries for once in a way help to distribute the physical pleasures and equalise the delights of the table all over the land. Wherever there is more than special need of this assistance, we earnestly urge the rich to be more bountiful than usual. To give is greater happiness than to receive. We know of no better receipt for making Christmas a right merry time



THE SUEZ CANAL; THE VICEROY'S GUESTS AT THE PYRAMIDS. *(See page 253.)*

amongst the wealthy than that of securing the happiness of giving. If everybody in his or her own way honestly tries to do something towards making somebody else happy next week (and every week for that matter), the Christmas of 1869 will be specially noted by the Recording Angel. Heaven grant it may!

The reader must forgive us for preaching. The season gives us the right to step aside from the ordinary path. Moreover, we have done our best to honour old Father Christmas. We have laid our tribute at his feet—our tribute of picture, song, and story, the combined work of many hands and brains. It is the first Pictorial Christmas Paper ever printed and published in the Midland Counties. We have tried to make it a worthy founder of a long race of Pictorial Supplements, and it goes forth with the earnest hope that it will strengthen the ties which already link us to Birmingham and the famous counties of Mid-England. This is our first Christmas. We have inaugurated it in the good old fashion of British journalism. Conscious of our shortcomings, but supported by an honest desire to be useful, and determined to plant our standard on the hill-top of Success, we heartily thank our friends and subscribers for their assistance, and promise to do our best to deserve their patronage.

This said, we lay down our pen and listen for the Christmas bells. The Christmas Supplement is printed. All the worry and excitement of that first work is at an end. Engravers, compositors, printers have finished. The last plunge of the engine is over, the machines are silent, the gas is out, the papers are stacked and ready for the publisher. For us Christmas is here, and we are ready to take our own advice and enjoy his society. Friendly reader, we venture to grasp your kindly hand, claiming the privilege of the time, and asking you to regard us as a stranger no longer. In Summer days and through the Autumn we have been your neighbour—often your guest: let our real friendship begin in the genial light of the great Christian Festival. May this be the happiest Christmas you have known, and the portal to a prosperous New Year!

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

The Empress of the Brazils has recovered from a severe illness.

Parliament will not meet until the 8th of February.

Admiral Rous, after undergoing four operations, is recovering.

There will be free trade in cabs in London after January 1.

The Spanish gunboats at New York have been released, and are on their way to Cuba.

The new French gold coins, value £1 each, are to be called "internationals."

The *Lancet* writes most hopefully of the condition of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The glory of the Kildonan diggings is fast departing. The diggers are frozen out.

A national memorial is to be raised to the late Lord Derby.

The Emperor Francis Joseph opened the Austrian Reichsrath on Monday with a speech from the throne.

United Protestant prayer meetings, in connection with the General Council at Rome, are being held in London.

The Queen has sent twenty brace of pheasants for the use of the patients at University College Hospital.

The Prince of Wales recently told the Duke of Abercorn that he would visit Ireland oftener if "pecuniary reasons did not stand in the way."

According to the *Record*, the prospects of a satisfactory reconstruction of the Irish Church become more and more clouded.

A petition has been lodged against the return of Sir Henry Barron for Waterford. Mr. Bernal Osborne claims the seat.

Yesterday (Friday) was breaking-up day at Eton College. The boys, of whom there are nearly 900 on the rolls, will return to school on the 19th of January.

James Mills climbed up between two boilers at Messrs. Bright Brothers' carpet works, Rochdale, on Saturday to sleep there. He was found the next morning scalded to death.

We learn, by French Atlantic Cable, that on Monday the House of Representatives passed, by 128 votes against 42, a resolution against the renewal of the Canadian reciprocity treaty.

M. De Lesseps, replying to an article of the *Times*, states that the Suez Canal Company requires no international co-operation, and will complete the works without additional funds or any interruption of navigation.

The Overend-Gurney case is proceeding at the Guildhall. It is expected to terminate this week.

Two men lost their lives in Hull dockyard on Saturday. One fell into the hold of a steamer, the other slipped into the water.

Konigsburg harbour is full of drift ice, and the harbour of Elbringen (also in Prussia) is frozen over.

The Oxford Local Examinations are to be extended to girls, the same as the Cambridge examinations.

The Bishop of London lately refused to ordain two candidates for Anglican orders because they believe in the Real Presence.

The 1st Dragoon Guards and the 80th and 40th Regiments of Foot have left for Ireland, as well as a detachment of the 24th.

John Mangles, described as "a well-dressed man," has been committed for trial at York Assizes, for attempting to throw a train off the rails near Moulton.

The *Exeter Gazette* mentions a rumour that Dr. Temple is about to marry Lady Mary Fielding, sister of Lord Denbigh. The statement has been contradicted.

Eight garotters were whipped at the Arnley Gaol on Saturday by order of Mr. Justice Lush. All the ruffians broke down under the cat, and two "sobbed violently."

A ton of gunpowder blew up at the Roslin Powder Mills, near Edinburgh, on Thursday week; no one was seriously hurt, but the building was blown to atoms.

The funded capital of the Royal Agricultural Society of England has been raised to £20,000 stock in the New Three per Cents.; and there is a reserve show fund of £4,612 7s. 8d.

It is officially announced from Florence that Signor Sella, having undertaken the task of forming a Cabinet, the resignation of the Menabrea Ministry has been finally accepted.

Father Hyacinthe has declined to visit Montreal. He considers that his present duty is "silence, prayer, and expectation." He has sailed for Paris.

The confirmation of Dr. Wilberforce to the bishopric of Winchester took place on Saturday morning, in the parish church of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside. Bishop Wilberforce was to be enthroned in Winchester Cathedral on Thursday.

A correspondent of the *Bristol Mirror* says a young man who, in a dispute the other day, made use of the horrible phrase, "May God strike me dead!" was paralysed instantaneously from head to foot, and rendered speechless!

It is said that the yearly damage which sparrows do in Hanover amounts to 50,000 bushels of cereals. Perhaps, however, it is unfair to make this computation by the autopsy of a single sparrow.

An expedition, numbering 1,500 men, has left for the Balkan Bay of the Caspian Sea, to attempt the discovery of a means of connecting the Caspian and Aral Seas by the bed of the ancient river Amudja.

Inundations have occurred in Pisa from the overflow of the Arno. The southern part of the city was four feet under water. The railway between Pisa and Leghorn is submerged for two miles.

It has been decided to make no reappointment to the office of the Master of the Mint. The present Deputy Master, Mr. Freemantle, will preside over the establishment, which will be attached to the Treasury.

On Friday a Devon steer at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, was found to be suffering from the foot and mouth disease. While it was being removed it broke loose, and ran amongst other cattle, and the same evening forty-four were found to be suffering from the same disease.

It is stated in the *Army and Navy Gazette* that Mr. Cardwell has decided upon the reduction of two companies in each battalion throughout the service; the abolition of all the depôt battalions—that at Chatham alone excepted; and the suppression of the 3rd West India Regiment.

United States' Navy.—It is stated that the Secretary of the Navy, in his forthcoming report, will recommend a total reorganisation of the United States' Navy, the sale of all the old and worthless vessels of the Isherwood class, and the construction of some new and more serviceable ships. The force of the navy now amounts to about 200 vessels. The Secretary will suggest that the peace footing be fixed at about 180 vessels.

The Pope and the Cardinals.—A Papal Constitution, dated the 4th of December, was promulgated on Tuesday, at Rome, ordaining that, in the event of the death of the Pope during the session of the Œcumenical Council, his successor can only be elected by the College of Cardinals, without the participation of the Council, which would be immediately prorogued, and only reassemble at the pleasure of the new Pontiff.

The Case of Bishop Twells.—The *Friend of the Free States* says:—"Should Bishop Twells fail either to appear or make any defence on the 31st of January next, the Metropolitan will, without delay, proceed to remove him from his bishopric, and after that it is to be hoped no difficulty will be allowed to prevent the consecration of the Venerable Archdeacon Merriman to the vacant see."

The Oaks Colliery Explosion.—The anniversary of the terrible calamity at the Oaks Colliery, in 1866, was solemnised on Sunday by special sermons in the Ardsley Church. There are still not fewer than 187 bodies in the workings, with no immediate prospect of their being recovered. During the past twelve months only from forty to fifty bodies have been got out, although the pit is being regularly worked. Of £46,884 which was raised, £4,717 was spent in relief during the first year, and £4,677 during the second year. There were 150 widows and about 300 children left destitute. In addition to these the committee have had to provide for the relief of parents and others who were supported by their children. Of the 150 widows, 56 have re-married, and received £10 each as a marriage portion, and three have died. Twelve of the orphans are at Ripon, two at Sheffield, and four at Bradford Industrial Homes, at the cost of the funds; whilst others have outstepped the bounds of relief.

The fasting girl, Sarah Jacobs, is being watched by four nurses from Guy's Hospital.

Mr. Joseph Cowen, jun., proprietor of the *Newcastle-on-Tyne Chronicle* has given £500 to the National Educational League.

An Example to be Followed.—The first instance of a non-commissioned officer of the British army having matriculated at one of the Universities has just occurred, Sergeant J. Snaden, of the Royal Engineers, having proceeded from the School of Military Engineering, Chatham, to Trinity College, Dublin, where he has graduated, a special order from the War Department authorising him to retain his present rank in the corps. Sergeant Snaden, at the recent competitive examination at Chatham, succeeded in obtaining the Royal Albert scholarship, which entitles him to £50 per annum for three years, and tuition at Trinity College, Dublin, in addition to which he was also awarded the gold medal. An order from the Horse Guards directs that Sergeant Snaden during the time he is prosecuting his studies at Trinity College is to continue to receive the regimental and departmental pay of his rank. Sergeant Snaden is entirely self-taught.

Execution of the Wood-Green Murderer.—Frederick Hinson, aged thirty-two, who was convicted of the murder of William Douglas Boyd, there being a second indictment of the same character against him for the murder of Maria Death, with whom he had lived for several years, was executed on Monday morning within the walls of Newgate. He was under the impression until very shortly before his death that he was quite justified in taking Boyd's life, because he regarded Maria Death as his wife. When Calcraft entered the condemned cell, the prisoner exhibited a good deal of firmness, which, howevee, forsook him shortly afterwards. He expressed a desire to shake hands with Mr. Jonas, the governor, and the other officers of the prison, and just as he was about to mount the scaffold he exclaimed in an audible voice, "Now for the grand secret." The Ordinary prayed for some time with the culprit while Calcraft was adjusting the apparatus, and while this was going on the culprit evidently became very faint, and he was supported under the drop by one of the officers of the gaol. When the platform fell he appeared to be dead almost in an instant.

The Court.—Her Majesty the Queen remains at Windsor. On Friday the Queen, accompanied by Princess Louise and Lady Augusta Stanley, walked and drove in the grounds. The American Minister and Mrs. Motley arrived at the Castle on Thursday, and had the honour of dining with the Queen and the Royal Family. Princess Christian came up to the Castle on Friday, and lunched with her Majesty. The Marquis of Westminster arrived at the Castle, and delivered up to her Majesty the insignia of the Order of the Garter, worn by his father. The Earl of Derby also arrived and delivered up the insignia of the Orders of the Garter and of St. Michael and St. George, worn by his father, the late Earl. The Prince of Wales, attended by Major Grey, returned to Marlborough House on Thursday from visiting the Earl de Grey and Ripon, at Studley Royal. Prince Christian returned to Frogmore on Thursday from visiting the Earl and Countess of Bradford, at Weston Park, Shiffnal. Earl de Grey and Ripon, the Lord Chamberlain, Earl Granville, and Mr. Bruce were present at the Council held by the Queen on Saturday. After the Council Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and Earl de Grey were invested with the riband and badge of the Garter. The Bishops of Winchester and Carlyle did homage on their appointment, and the former prelate was invested with the badge of prelate of the Order of the Garter. Garter King of Arms was introduced to her Majesty, and made the declaration of the office of the Garter; and the sheriffs of London and Middlesex, Mr. Alderman Causton and Mr. James Vallentin, received the honour of knighthood. Lady Susan Melville, the Marquis of Ormonde, and Lord Napier of Magdala dined with the Queen on Saturday. On Sunday morning her Majesty attended Divine service in the chapel at Windsor. The Bishop of Winchester preached the sermon. The Prince of Wales and a party of friends were expected to arrive at Sandringham on Wednesday for a week's shooting. The Royal party will stay at Park House and the Bachelor's Cottage. Shortly after Christmas the Prince will, it is expected, return to Sandringham with the Princess.

The Halifax Gold Mining Company.—There bids fair to be almost as great a gold excitement "at home," as we may call it, as there was a few years ago in California and Australia. The Kildonan diggings have failed, and the diggers are snowed out; and investors in this description of speculation will do well to look out for some other pastures on which to experiment. At present, there is nothing in the market which is half so attractive as the undertaking commenced under the auspices of the Halifax Gold-mining Company, which, with a capital of £50,000, is established for the purpose of acquiring and working gold mines in the province of Nova Scotia, as occasion may from time to time offer; and to reduce quartz, &c., at the company's mills for other mine owners in the neighbourhood of the company's works. The directors have entered into a provisional contract for the purchase of the Leopold gold mine, in the rich district of Musquodoboit, which consists of 400 acres of freehold land, abounding in timber; and secondly, the mining rights over 175 acres of this freehold; which rights are held under government, one part subject to a royalty of 3 per cent. on the gold obtained, and the other free of royalty. There are twenty-five auriferous quartz lodes, and other lodes may yet be discovered. Five of these lodes only have been tested; they have yielded altogether 403½ ounces of gold, which is considered highly remunerative. The main lode may be relied upon to yield in fair working, as the shafts proceed, half-an-ounce per ton; whilst one of the others gives 3½ ounces per ton. It may then be assumed, that when the lodes are more fully opened upon, the average yield will not be less than one ounce of gold per ton of quartz. Such gold-producing lodes as these afford a far higher promise of profit than most of the Brazilian and Australian mines, now so eagerly sought after by the public. Indeed, it is confidently believed that even with the present imperfect machinery and plant, the mine is already capable of paying more than 15 per cent. upon the whole of the present issue.

THE HOUSEHOLD.

Excellent Plum Pudding.—Take of flour one pound; bicarbonate of soda, two drachms: beef suet, eight ounces; currants, eight ounces, and as many raisins; nutmeg and orange peel, grated fine, quarter of an ounce; three eggs: to be boiled or steamed four hours. For Christmas use only lemon peel and candid citron, and a little bread.

A Hint about Fern Stands.—Never let a draught of air blow upon your fern stand. It is poison to them; and should it happen, you will find the tender young fronds just starting into life all blackened and shrivelled in less than an hour. This was first told me by a well-known florist in London, from whom I bought several of my ferns, and who seemed quite astonished when I told him I grew them in windows. "Did I not find draughts impossible to avoid, and consequent deaths to my ferns ensue?" This gave me a clue to the reason of the dead young fronds; and now, even in summer, I rarely open the windows in which the ferns live without first lifting the stand far away.—*Correspondent of "The Queen."*

A Charade Dress.—A pleasant gossip in *The Queen* says:—At an evening party the other night I saw some charades very well got up. One dress, representing the fashions of 1745, was extremely effective. I was amused to hear afterwards that it was composed of very inexpensive materials. The skirt was made of a striped cotton; it is quite new, is called, I think, satin-faced cotton, and is only 8½d. a yard. The upper skirt, much puffed and frilled, was composed of a white *piqué*, with a pattern of rosebuds. The boddice was square cut, which, together with the half-sleeves, was almost like what we are wearing now. This dress will, no doubt, do duty on several occasions this Christmas.

Plain Shawls.—Plain crochet shawls, to be worn under a mantle, may be easily made in the following manner: With a bone crochet, make a loose chain of 57 stitches to fit the throat (if not large enough, must be increased by 6 stitches); turn back, 3 chain, 1 treble (take up the thread before putting the needle in the stitch, draw the thread through the stitch, which makes 3 loops on the needle, draw the thread through two, and then through two again) in each of the chain stitches of the foundation, making 2 chain after every third treble throughout the row. 2nd row. Turn back, 3 chain, 2 treble between 1st and 2nd treble of last row, 2 chain, 3 treble into space between the three trebles of last row; repeat from (in the middle space of the row, put two groups of 3 trebles with 2 chains between them), and continue to end of row. 3rd and all other rows like 2nd row, always putting 2 groups of treble with 2 chain between into centre space, to form the point of the shawl. It may be increased to any size, but for a small shawl to wear under a mantle 23 rows are generally sufficient. When finished, do a row of plain crochet up the sides of the front and round the neck to make it firm, and tie in a fringe at the edge. Fingering wool is suitable for these shawls, and they look well with fourteen rows of any bright colour for the centre, 1 row white, 5 black, 1 white, and 2 of centre colour. The fringe may be either black or the same colour as the centre. Make a plait of wool with a tassel at each end, to tie the shawl together at the throat.

Poison in Hosiery.—Some time ago there was a discussion in the papers on the injuries resulting from wearing coloured hose. There was more in the agitation than might be at first supposed, *vide* the following from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*:—

"Of the poisonous character of some of the dyes used for these articles, there can be no doubt. A French chemist has been investigating the point, and has brought the subject before the Paris Academy of Sciences. Picture to yourself a grave assembly engrossed with a discussion upon *les bas de soie rouge!* Blue-stockings in solemn session upon red stockings! The doctor, Professor Tardieu, had been consulted by a young man whose feet were inflamed and ulcerated from the wearing of red socks; and, at about the same time, some other cases came before him of like evils, evidently traceable to a like cause. So he took his patients' *chaussettes*, and extracted the colouring matter from them by chemical treatment. Then he injected small quantities of it beneath the thigh-skins of a frog, a rabbit, and a dog. All the animals died with poisonous symptoms; the frog in four hours, the dog in thirty-six, and the rabbit on the third day after the experiment. Next he procured some of the original dye, known, from its beautiful tint, as coralline, and made similar trials with the same results. A colleague actually succeeded in dyeing a skein of silk with the matter re-extracted from the lungs and liver of one of the poisoned subjects. Coralline is a near relative of aniline, the blue and violet dyes from which are stated, by an able chemist, to be dangerously contaminated with arsenic. It is a treacherous family altogether, and we must be chary of allowing our connection with it to become too intimate."

Hosiers should announce socks and stockings "free from all poisonous colouring:" such goods would have a large sale.

Sausages.—I was glad to see your note upon this subject, and the extract from the *Athenæum*. It may be interesting to many of your readers to have a few authentic receipts for making various kinds of sausages:—

Worcester Sausages.—These are made of beef. They do not look very inviting in second-rate butchers' shops, but well and carefully made they are excellent. Use good beef, add a little allspice, a few herbs, and other spices according to taste. In the "faithful city," which this compound takes its title from, the poor people are gratified at one shop by seeing the meat put into the sausage machine, and waiting until the preparation is ready for use.

Mutton Sausages.—Take the lean of the leg. Add half as much of beef suet—that is, a pound of lean and half a pound of suet (this proportion is good for all sausages). Add oysters, anchovies chopped very fine, and flavour with seasoning. No herbs. These will require a little fat in the pan to fry.

Preparing Sausage Skins.—Turn them inside out, and stretch them on a stick; wash and scrape them in several waters. When thoroughly cleansed, take them off the sticks, and soak in salt and water two or three hours before filling.

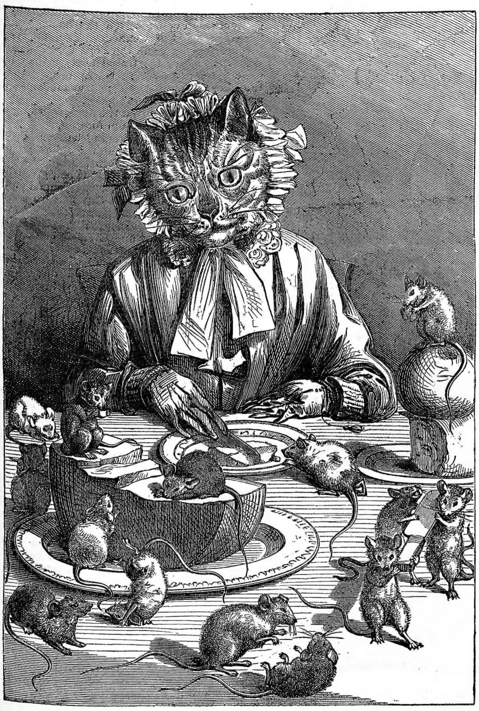
Bologna Sausages.—Take equal quantities of bacon, fat and lean, beef, veal, pork, and beef suet; chop them small, season with pepper, salt, &c., sweet herbs, and sage rubbed fine. Have a well-washed intestine, fill, and prick it; boil gently for an hour, and lay on straw to dry. They may be smoked the same as hams.

Oxford Sausages.—To each pound of lean pork allow one pound of lean veal, one pound of fat, part pork and part veal. Chop and beat well with a lard-beater. Allow one pound of bread-crumbs, thyme, a little parsley; an ounce of sage leaves, chopped very small; two heads of leeks, or a little garlic, or shalot, chopped very fine; salt, pepper, and nutmeg.

The latter is the best kind of sausage I know; the receipt is from *Enquire Within*. I can strongly recommend it.—Housekeeper.

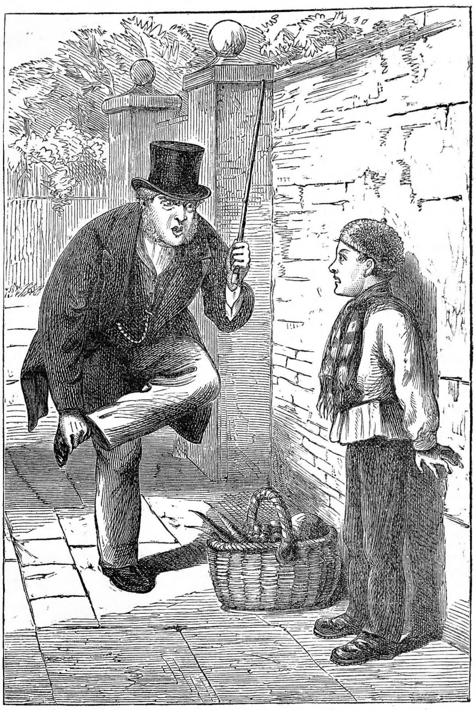
QUEER DISCOURSES.[*]

A proverb does not always mean what it says. although, if it is a good one, it always says what it means. This is the key to "Old Merry's" quaint little book, which many a boy and girl will read with delight this Christmas. We have selected from the work, by the kind permission of Mr. Merry himself (though we have not the honour of his acquaintance—he is one of the modern mysteries) two pictures, which will give our younger readers a foretaste of the treat that is in store for them. The first engraving is a burlesque interpretation of the proverb, "The cat in gloves catches no mice." Upon this theme "Old Merry" writes most wisely and gracefully, and his moral is one that cannot fail to sink deeply into brave and tender little hearts.



"THE CAT IN GLOVES CATCHES NO MICE."

Our second Picture gives a literal and physical rendering of the proverb, "Never tread on a sore toe;" but the judicious "Old Merry," in the text, keeps to the moral aspect of the subject. "I once met a gentleman walking out with some ladies, in a gay part of the town, and very much he seemed to be enjoying his stroll. He was elegantly dressed, and as it was the summer season he wore a white hat. By-and-by a lad passed; by the curl on his lip I could see he was harbouring in his mind some evil intent. Cautiously he walked up to the gentleman, and breathed out a dreadful slander on his moral character. I need not repeat it; it had reference to the theft of an animal often found attached to costermongers' carts. In a moment a cloud fell over the smile on the gentleman's face, he coloured up more in anger than in sorrow, and it seemed as if the pleasure of the walk was gone. The boy had trodden on his sore toe!"



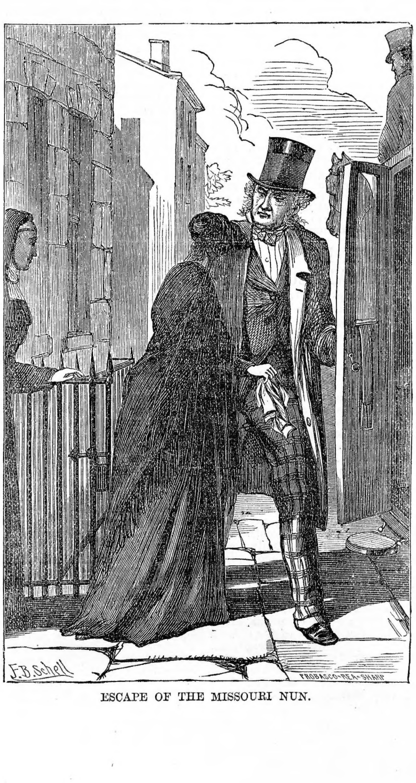
"NEVER TREAD ON A SORE TOE."

This is followed by another story, full of suggestion and interest, wound up with a bit of advice that may be usefully studied and noted down by young and old of all classes. "These illustrations will help you to find others. Think of the thousand pains and troubles which might be spared if people would only refrain from treading upon the sore toes of others. Think how much more delightful it is to make others happy than to cause them sorrow. Look with a charitable eye on the weak parts of others, for all have their weak parts, and try rather to heal a wound than to tear it open. Never laugh at anything which will cause another distress, or say anything which you know will irritate or annoy. 'Mention not a rope in the house of one whose father was hanged.'"

A little word in kindness spoken,
  A motion or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that's broken,
  And made a friend sincere.

PRIESTS AND NUNS.[†]

At Christmas time, more than at any other, we do not like to tread upon sore toes. "Queer Discourses," and that kindly paragraph which closes our notice of that work, have made us feel a little regret at the introduction of "Priest and Nun" to our readers this week. It is a clever searching book, full of downright Protestant blows at the Jesuits. The genial glow of Christmas tide must be putting honey into our ink, or surely we should not have any compunction in placing this work in our Christmas parcel; for the Jesuits have well-earned the opposition of the press in all countries, and the exposure which follows so many of their strange and daring intrigues. The story under notice is written more for American than English readers, though it is published simultaneously in both countries. It is the chief aim of the author to warn the American nation against the insidious progress of Romanism in that country; but the Jesuits are chiefly dealt with, and they form a society which is hated in some quarters as much by Roman Catholics themselves as by Protestants. The book is said to be written upon facts, which the author says can be substantiated. One of the incidents of the work is the escape of a nun from a convent at Missouri, and this has an illustration which we have borrowed as a fair example of the other pictures that crowd the work. Apart from the strong Protestant aims of the author, and the facts in his or her possession, the book is wonderfully interesting, full of plots and machinations, strange surprises, and startling incidents; it is ten times more interesting than many a novel, and it has this advantage over most novels—it is in one volume.



ESCAPE OF THE MISSOURI NUN.

COLLIERS IMPRISONED.

The Black Country was greatly excited a few days ago by a widespread report that a terrible disaster had happened at Lord Dudley's No. 5, Rounds-hill pit, near Wolverhampton. The facts are as follow:—At eleven o'clock on Friday night 120 colliers were released from imprisonment in the pit above mentioned. They had been below ground without food for seventeen hours, for they had descended at six in the morning. They would have had their dinner sent to them at noon, and would have come up at six if everything had gone on well. At eleven in the forenoon, however, the principal crown wheel of the drawing-engine, which is about two tons in weight, snapped at the shoulder when a skip was in the middle of each of the two shafts communicating with the workings, all of which are 150 yards beneath the surface. Happily, the machinery was supplied with a powerful break. This the engine-driver applied with great promptitude, and thus the skips were prevented from dashing back into the pit to the risk of life and the destruction of the whole winding gear. The pits' companies quickly learnt that something was wrong, and, leaving off work, they came to the bottom of the shafts, anxiously waiting for the adjustment of matters above-ground. The position of the skips in the shaft had so far cut off the current of air as to make the workings unsafe. but, inasmuch as the entire circumference of these two great airways was not blocked by the skips, there was ventilation enough for the colliers as they remained at the shaft openings. Provisions could not, however, be got past the skips, and when night came on matters began to assume a rather threatening aspect, for the water, which was flowing freely into the pit, and could not now be pumped out, began to rise in earnest, and had got to a height of two feet around the shaft bottom. Through this all the men had to pass when, at eleven o'clock, the machinery on the surface was so far repaired that one shaft could be worked. Considering the massiveness of the casting which had to be replaced, the twelve hours which had elapsed before the men could be got out was a remarkably brief time. The work done forms a fitting corollary to the immense and successful efforts which were made by Lord Dudley's people when the now historical accident by the overflowing of water occurred at his lordship's Nine Locks pit, at Brierley Hill. Happily, also, it is the custom to keep duplicates at the central foundry of such machinery as that which had to be replaced on Friday night.

Mr. John Gray, of Blyton, was terribly scalded on Friday by the bursting of a water-bottle, which he had placed in the oven, "being," says a contemporary, "ignorant of steam's powerful effects."

A LEGEND OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.—Dean Stanley records in his "History of Westminster Abbey," a wild legend, yet one precious to those who love the Sabbath, as showing how sacred the Lord's day was held in the worst ages of the church, and in times long antecedent to the fall of Popery and the rise of Puritanism. The Abbey was consecrated, so the legend runs, by a celestial being. The time of his appearance was a Sunday evening, and his form that of a man. He was ferried across the Thames by a fisherman whom he found engaged fishing for salmon. So soon as he stepped from the boat to the bank where the Abbey stood, the whole sky burst into a blaze of light, and the astonished fisherman, resting on his oars, saw a great multitude of angels descending, each carrying a lighted candle. Attended by this brilliant train, the celestial consecrated the house of God. When the ceremony was over he returned by the way he came, but not till, along with an injunction that the Thames should pay tithe of salmon to the monks, he warned his ferryman to abstain henceforth from fishing on the Lord's day.

The engine and tender of the Lincoln and Tamworth mail train were thrown off the rails near Nottingham the other night. Some large pieces of timber were discovered on the line, and it took four hours to repair the road. The accident seems to have been caused by some luggage trucks separating from a train and remaining in the way of the mail.

THE VALLEY OF DEATH.—The following is a probable explanation of the origin of the upas tree story:—A real valley of death exists in Java—it is termed the Valley of Poison, and is filled to a considerable height with carbonic acid gas, which is exhaled from crevices in the ground. If a man or animal enter it, he cannot return; and he is not sensible of his danger until he feels himself sinking under the poisonous influence of the atmosphere which surrounds him; the carbonic acid, of which it chiefly consists, rising to the height of eighteen feet from the bottom of the valley. Birds which fly into this atmosphere drop down dead; and a living fowl thrown into it dies before it reaches the bottom, which is strewed with carcases of various animals that have perished in the deleterious gas.

THE MORMON CENTRE.—Outside of Utah, with its resident population of about 150,000, New York city is probably the greatest centre of Mormon operations. Here is the grand depôt of their emigration department; and Mormon agents and elders are constantly passing through the city on business of various kinds. Moreover, there is a regularly organised Mormon Branch Church in Williamsburg, which is, however, only a mere resting-place for a few stationary saints, who are abiding here chiefly for the purpose of assisting those converts who require aid before they leave for head-quarters. Scattered throughout various parts of Europe are Mormon "Conferences," comprising about 15,000 persons. Converts are added occasionally, and when a company is ready to emigrate it is taken in charge by one of Brigham Young's agents, and brought directly to New York.

A MOTHER MURDERING HER DAUGHTER.—Paris is excited with the report of a tragedy which has just been enacted on the Boulevard St. Germain. A widow had resolved to commit suicide, and persuaded her daughter, who was of weak intellect, to die with her. They wrote letters to their friends, and attempted to suffocate themselves with charcoal, but, as death did not come quickly enough, they drank some eau de Javelle (a bleaching fluid used by washerwomen), and in which they dissolved some phosphorous scraped from lucifer matches. Even this poison did not produce any immediate result, and the mother then took a curtain rope and strangled her daughter, with the intention of afterwards putting an end to her own life; she lighted more charcoal, but without success, and at length went down stairs and told the house porter's wife to come up for a moment. On the latter woman shortly after going into the room she found Madame B— crouching on the ground over the body of her daughter. The mother is in custody.

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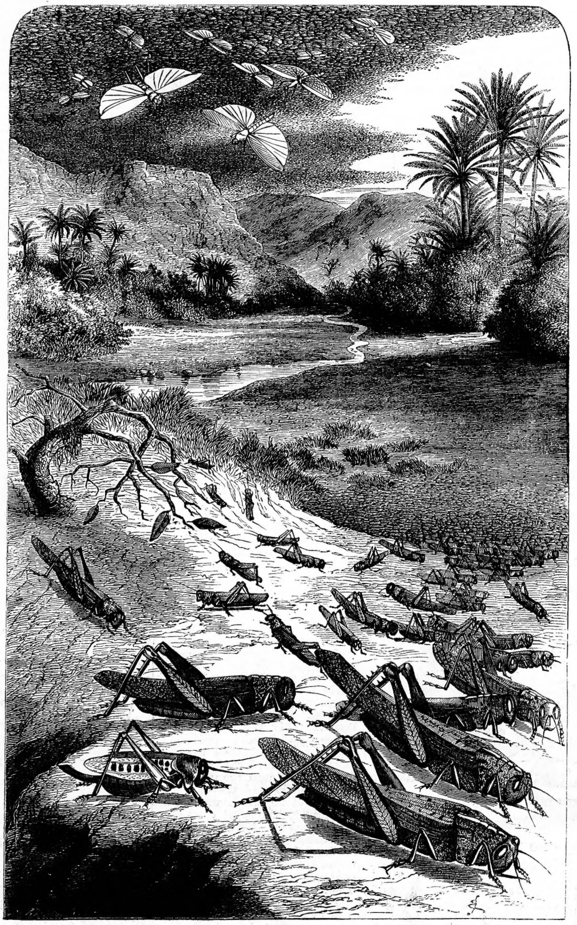
[*] "Queer Discourses on Queer Proverbs." By Old Merry. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

[†] "Priest and Nun: a Story of Convent Life." London: Hodder and Stoughton.

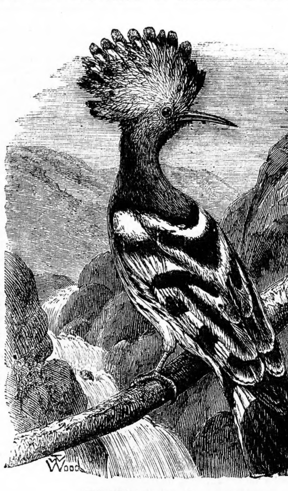
BIBLE ANIMALS.*

An endless field of enquiry is offered by the Book of books. Every study has a reference page in the Bible. History, geology, geography, ethnology, astronomy, laws, and sciences, everything one can think of has a place in the Holy Scriptures. The Biblical scholar who would rightly interpret the Book must know something of the sciences too before he can understand the least difficult of the holy writings. Any work which takes up a special feature of the Bible for the purpose of enlarging the human understanding generally, and more particularly with regard to the Bible, is entitled to a hearty welcome. We believe the attempt of Mr. Wood to give an exhaustive treatise upon the Natural History of the Bible is the first complete and successful effort in this direction. The object of "Bible Animals" is to take in its proper succession every creature whose name is given in the Scriptures, and to supply so much of its history as will enable the reader to understand all the passages in which it is mentioned. A general account of each animal is first given, followed by special explanations (wherever required) of those texts in which pointed reference is made to it, but of which the full force cannot be gathered without a knowledge of Natural History. The illustrations are all taken from the living animals; while the accessory details have been obtained either from the Egyptian or Assyrian monuments, from actual specimens, or from the photographs and drawings of the latest travellers. They have been selected and arranged for each illustration to explain one or more passages of Scripture; so that the work shall possess equal interest for the natural historian and the Biblical student.

The Scriptures abounding in metaphors understood thoroughly by the people of the East, it is a great assistance to a proper reading of the various books to see their force as the Eastern people saw them. For example, the frequent references to the locust are only fully appreciated when the reader knows what this extraordinary insect really was in the past and is in the present. "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth, all of them, by bands." At least four species of locust are mentioned in the Scriptures. The first of the Hebrew words is *arbeh*. This was the terrible scourge alluded to in Jeremiah: "They shall cut down the forest, saith the Lord, though it cannot be searched." The *chagal* is a similar species of locust, probably of the same character as that which found its way to Birmingham and other districts a few weeks ago, and which we engraved as a rarity. The illustration which we borrow from the work under notice is in no sense overdrawn. Travellers of the present day have ridden over miles of country covered with this insect many inches deep. Happily England is spared the ravages of this awful pest as it is spared many other scourges which afflict the East. Herodotus in describing the various tribes of Libyans mentions the use of the locust as an article of diet. The Nasamones dried them in the sun, reduced them to powder, sprinkled them with milk, and drank the compound. The Bosjesmans of Southern Africa eat them similarly prepared at the present day. Several travellers tell us that the locust is excellent food, and amongst them Dr. Livingstone. We may therefore see (and here is an example of the use of the work before us) that the food of St. John the Baptist was, like his dress, that of a people who lived at a distance from towns, and that there was no more hardship in the one than in the other. Some commentators have tried to prove that St. John fed on the fruit of the locust or carob tree—the same that is used so much in this country for feeding cattle; but there is no ground for such an explanation. The account of his life, indeed, is perfectly natural; locust dust mixed with honey being an ordinary article of food even at the present time. The snake which we engrave is not strictly identified with the viper of Scripture, but there is every reason to believe this is the reptile. Mr. Tristram is a good authority, and this is his verdict. The remarkable bird which we introduce is the hoopoe, or lapwing of Scripture. "And the stork, the heron after her kind, the lapwing, and the bat." With regard to the crest of this bird there is a curious Eastern legend. On one of his journeys, the story goes, King Solomon was perishing from the heat of the sun. The hoopoes came to his aid, flying in a dense mass over his head. In return the king asked them to request any boon and it should be granted. The birds after consulting together desired that every hoopoe might wear a crown of gold like Solomon himself. The request was granted, and from that moment the birds were persecuted by the fowlers, and they found the crown heavy and burdensome in addition. Eventually they came to Solomon again and begged him to rescind his fatal gift, which he did, substituting a crest of feathers for the crown of gold.



THE LOCUST.—" All the trees shall the locust consume."—Deuteronomy xxviii, 42.



THE HOOPOE.—The lapwing of Scripture.

We can strongly commend Mr. Wood's new work to our readers. Although only one department of Natural History, namely Zoology, can be said to be really treated in the volume, it is illustrated by many references to the physical geography of Palestine, Egypt, and Syria, the race-character of the inhabitants and historic parallels.

OPENING OF THE ROMAN COUNCIL.

The long-talked of Œcumenical Council began on the 8th inst. On the 6th the Pope received ninety-two Italian bishops in one audience, and then gave a similar reception to a hundred priests coming from all the Italian provinces. The priests, carried away by their enthusiasm, threw themselves in a mass on the Pope to kiss his foot, and so pressed the Holy Father that he was obliged to call the Noble Guard to his rescue. On their coming up the Sovereign Pontiff rose from his throne and quitted the saloon. The priests were deeply humiliated by this mark of displeasure, and persuaded Monsignor Pacca to entreat the Pope to return, solemnly pledging themselves to be more prudent. The Holy Father yielded, and again took his seat on the throne, where, without alluding to the incident, he pronounced a discourse on the Council, deploring that certain questions which were to be decided by the fathers of the Church *en famille* had been dragged into the newspapers. He vehemently condemned the practice of giving publicity to such affairs.

The Roman correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* says a very violent scene took place between the Holy Father and Cardinal Antonelli. The Pope, regardless of obstacles, clings to his resolution to procure from the Council the dogmatic enunciation of his infallibility, and has, indeed, so set his heart on this issue that his household believe he will not survive its rejection. There seems to be no doubt that the majority of the bishops will do whatever he wishes; but, on the other hand, the opposition is so powerful that Cardinal Antonelli a day or two ago urged him to defer the question, representing that the consequences of pressing it now might prove very serious. The Pope combated his arguments, and at last flew into a passion, exclaiming, "Hold your tongue. You are a diplomatist; you are not a theologian. Confine yourself to what you understand." Cardinal Antonelli is greatly exasperated, and has since avoided having an audience. I must, in justice, add that the Pope has published a *communiqué* in the *Osservatore Romano* severely censuring the *Univers* and the *Unità Cattolica* for their attacks on the Bishop of Orleans.

On the 8th, the opening day of the Council, the weather was very bad; yet by daybreak, the inner atrium and grand nave of the Vatican Basilica, through which the procession passed, were thronged by spectators. At nine o'clock, amid the ringing of the bells of all the ecclesiastical edifices in the city and salvoes of artillery from the Castle of San Angelo and Mount Aventino, the procession, formed in the upper atrium of the Vatican, descended the Scala Regia, and passed through the lower atrium into the cathedral. Regular and secular clergy were ranged on either side, and the procession consisted of six archbishop Princes, forty-nine cardinals, eleven patriarchs, 680 archbishops and bishops, twenty-eight abbots, and twenty-nine Generals of religious orders. In all about 800 ecclesiastics preceded the Pope, who was carried into the cathedral in the gestatorial chair. His Holiness first knelt some time before the Sacrament, and the assembly then took their places in the Council Hall in seven rows. After mass had been chanted by Cardinal Patrizi, the Archbishop of Iconium pronounced the inaugural discourse. The Pope, who appeared to be in the enjoyment of excellent health, then gave his benediction—the ceremony being carried out in exact accordance with the State programme. The tribunes of the Council Hall were occupied by the Sovereigns and Princes present in Rome, the members of the Diplomatic Body, Generals Dumont and Kanzler, and the Roman and foreign nobility. The Council Hall presented a most splendid and imposing appearance. After giving the benediction, the Pope received the homage of the members of the Council. The appointed prayers followed, and the Pope three times invoked the aid of the Holy Ghost for the Council, a hymn to the Holy Ghost being sung by the choristers. Persons not members of the assembly then quitted the hall.

The prelates approved the decree opening the Council, and the Te Deum followed.

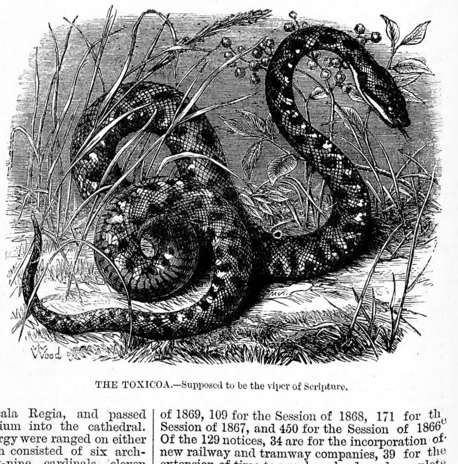
The ceremony terminated at half-past two.

When the Council met on the following day the Pope read to the members assembled a short homily, in which he said that it had given him great pleasure to inaugurate the Council on the appointed day, and to see the Bishops assembled at Rome in greater numbers than ever. In conclusion, he invoked the Holy Spirit, the Virgin, and the holy angels. The next sitting of the Council is fixed for the feast of the Epiphany, when there will be voted and promulgated decrees which will have been drawn up at the private sittings of the Congregations.

THE ENTRANCE HALL OF THE CORPS LEGISLATIF.

On page 256 we give a large engraving of the entrance hall of the French Corps Legislatif, with portraits of the principal members. Amongst the better-known faces are those of M. Thiers, Jules Favre, Raspail, Bancel, Gambetta, de Kératry, Léopold Lehon, Pinard, Bourbeau, Picard, Jules Simon, Garnier-Pagès, Ferry, Pelletan, Emile Ollivier, le général Le Bœuf, de Tillancourt, Jubinal, &c.

Newspaper readers must be as familiar with many of these senators' names as they are with those of Gladstone, Disraeli, Bright, and Pakington; while those who see the Paris journals will recognise in the group two at least of the most popular writers on the French Press. M. Raspail's name has been brought prominently forward this week from the occurrence of a scene in the Corps Législatif, in which he was a principal actor in conjunction with M. Rochefort, whose portrait we gave last week. M. Raspail complained that he had been misreported, and the President, amidst great din and clamour, said the *procès vêrbal* should be corrected. Then Rochefort rose, and said they wished "for no more expeditions of pillage like that to China;" "irony and derision would not put down M. Raspail and himself."—M. Rolle: Why, irony and abuse are your own weapons.—M. Rochefort: I repeat that the Minister tried to ridicule us, and in so doing only carries on the system introduced by the Chief of the State at the opening of the Chamber. The Chief of the State thought proper to sneer. (Loud cries of "Order, order.")—The President: Personal remarks concerning the Chief of the State must not be made here.—M. Rochefort: I have been provoked—insulted by him. (Great noise, and evident disgust everywhere.) The Minister has declared that the Empire desires to found liberty. Well, I say that to laugh at the Deputy of the First Circumscription of Paris is a droll way of inaugurating it. I will say more—ridiculous as I may be, I have never walked on the seashore with an eagle on my shoulder and bacon in my hat.—An awful outcry then arose; and ten minutes after this very gentlemanlike speech (says the *Telegraph's* Paris correspondent) the Count de Rochefort rose and swore fidelity to the Emperor. The reader will see that even when Senators are Frenchmen altercations will arise.



THE TOXICOA.—Supposed to be the viper of Scripture.

New Railway and Tramway Bills.—The notices of intended application to Parliament in the ensuing Session for Railway and Tramway Bills are 129 as compared with 78 for the Session of 1869, 109 for the Session of 1868, 171 for the Session of 1867, and 450 for the Session of 1866 Of the 129 notices, 34 are for the incorporation of new railway and tramway companies, 39 for the extension of time to purchase lands and complete works, and 18 for the abandonment of branch and extension lines. The 129 notices include those for 19 Tramway Bills, of which 10 are for the incorporation of new street and road tramway companies. The number of notices for the incorporation of new companies is the same as that for the last Session of Parliament.

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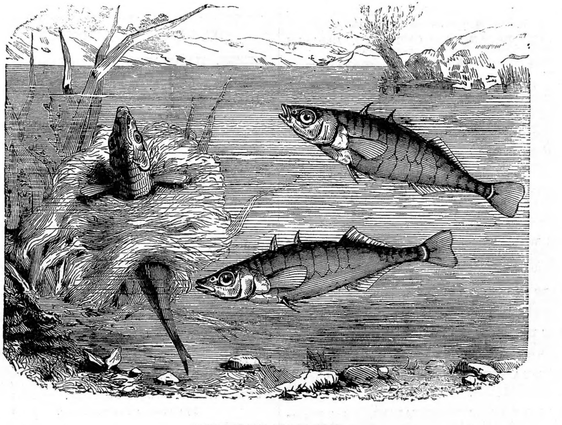
* "Bible Animals," being a description of every living creature mentioned in the Scriptures, from the ape to the coral. By the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A., &c. With 100 new designs by W. F. Keyl, &c. 8vo, pp. 684, price 21s. cloth. London: Longmans & Co.

THE UNIVERSE.*

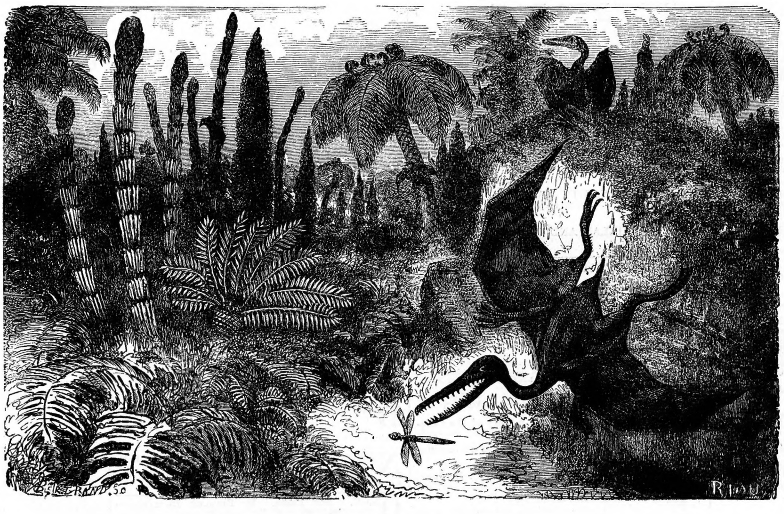
One of the most entertaining, instructive, and lavishly-illustrated works which has been published for some years, "The Universe,'" pretty well tells its story in its title. The Universe! It is a grand subject, inexhaustible as the conjuror's bottle; there is no getting at its deepest depths or its highest heights. The story of the world: what can be more important, more interesting, more engrossing? Nothing.

Mons. Pouchett thinks like a thousand writers and compilers before him. The mistake usually made by philosophers who have told this wonderful tale before is that they have talked in a jargon of their own, mixing scientific slang with common-place matters, confusing the young student and the ordinary reader. The author of the splendid work before us has avoided all this. "Whoever aspires to the title of a philosopher has, in the present day, a double mission to perform—to discover and to popularize; he should labour on the one hand for the advancement, on the other for the diffusion of science. The zoologists and botanists who shed the greatest lustre on our modern epoch have shown, by the publication of their contributions on natural history, that they appreciate the Sacred mission. I have here only imitated them in a somewhat more extended manner, and hope I shall be pardoned for following such an example." Such is M. Pouchet's faith.

The work is translated from the French, and has the advantage of containing all the exquisite illustrations of the original, upon which the publishers expended an enormous sum. M. Faguet, assistant-naturalist at the Sarbonne, an accomplished botanist and draughtsman, has given a special character to the drawings of the plants; M. Mesuel has drawn the zoological pictures with exquisite taste; and M. Emile Bayard has enriched the work with some charming landscapes. Many of the illustrations are coloured, the whole can only have been produced at an enormous cost. The work is divided into Books, devoted separately to "The Animal Kingdom," "The Vegetable Kingdom," "Geology," "The Sidereal Universe," and "Popular Errors." The style of writing is clear and simple, and the matter excellent, showing not only wide and deep research, but immense personal knowledge and observation. The work is made perfect by a most complete index, it is beautifully printed, and will become without doubt a standard publication. By the courtesy of the publishers we are enabled to reproduce several examples of the illustrations. Our first sketch is from a chapter on fishes. It represents a stickleback's nest—a curiosity we will be bound to many of our juvenile readers, who catch this little fish with small nets. Another illustration is from a chapter on flowers. As an extreme protective precaution of nature some flowers are covered with an envelope, or spathe, which only falls away at the time of opening. In small-sized monocotyledons, such as the iris and garlic, this envelope is very thin, membranous, and transparent; whilst in some great species, like the palms, this supplementary cradle of the young flowers acquires colossal proportions; it is thick, woody, and resembles a large cup, one or two yards long, and this allows the negresses sometimes to make use of it as a bath for their children, such as is shown in our illustration. From the geological section of the work we take our larger picture. It is admirably conceived, and will be appreciated by all who know anything of the works of Cuiver, Owen, and Miller. Never were "the infinitely great and infinitely little" more thoroughly amalgamated than in this remarkable work "The Universe."



STICKLEBACK IN ITS NEST.



IMAGINARY VIEW OF A LANDSCAPE OF THE SECONDARY EPOCH, WITH PTERODACTYLS: LIAS PERIOD.

WORKMEN'S INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, 1870.

The Honorary Secretaries write to the papers to say that the Council of the Workmen's International Exhibition, to be opened on the 7th of July, 1870, at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, has determined to hold a conference of delegates from the towns of the United Kingdom, and of other countries, on the 10th of January next, at the Rooms of the Society of Arts, in John-street, Adelphi, which have kindly been lent for that occasion. The day's business will begin at 10 a.m., and will be distributed as follows:—1. Statement and discussion of the proposed method of arrangement. 2. Statement and discussion of the proposed system of prizes and appointment of jurors. 3. Discussion on the opening of workshops in the exhibition. 4. Reports, statements, and suggestions from local committees. 5. Statement and discussion as to the means to be adopted to make the exhibition promote the interests of technical education. Mr. Mundella, M.P., and Mr. S. Morley, M.P., will successively occupy the chair during the day's sitting. In the evening a public meeting will be held at 8.30, at Exeter Hall, at which Professor Huxley will preside, if it should be impossible for the President (the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.) to be present. The following resolutions will be moved: 1. "That the principles laid down in the prospectus of the Workmen's International Exhibition of 1870, which require the worker's name to be attached to the article produced, are both just and useful as tending to give workmen their share in the credit of production, and to increase the pride and interest which attaches to skilled labour." 2. "That it is of the highest importance to develop amongst all the people a true perception of what is beautiful in colour and form, and a scientific knowledge of the machinery and material employed in existing industries; and this meeting pledges its best exertions to promote the success of the Workmen's International Exhibition of 1870, as a valuable instrument to this end." 3. "That the trade knowledge and aptitude for combination shown by workmen, who can produce for a workman's exhibition an article requiring many different kinds of labour deserved the encouragement of every class as the first steps towards greater and more important kinds of co-operation." 4. "That it is in the interest of all nations that each should stimulate the other in the development of their highest productive powers, the prosperity of every people requiring continual progress in the cultivation of human faculties, and that perfection of method and machinery which yields the largest return to the day's labour." The Council hopes that all towns will call together a public meeting and appoint delegates to attend the conference. We understand that in this district the leading manufacturers have held aloof from the movement—for what reason we are unaware.

THE ACCIDENT AT CRADLEY.

An inquiry into the death of Charles Tasker, who was killed in the collision on the Great Western Railway at Cradley, on Wednesday, the 8th inst., was opened at the Vine Hotel, Cradley, on Friday. It will be remembered that the 4.45 p.m. express from Birmingham ran into a coal train, part of which was in a siding and part across the line. The express engine-driver had a miraculous escape, the fireman met a dreadful death—his legs were crushed off, and his body cut through. One passenger (Thomas Hall, of Burford, Oxon,) was injured, and the driver of the express was shaken. There was no fatal case, with the exception of that mentioned. The rails were torn up by the collision, the engine and tender were turned completely round, and some of the carriage wheels were knocked off and the windows broken. By the regulations laid down for the use of the officials, the siding ought to have been locked, thus preventing the coal train from getting on to the main line: the directions appear to have been disgracefully neglected, and hence the fatality, which it is extraordinary was not more serious. The following extract from the evidence of the guard of the goods train (Daniel Porter) is instructive. Porter told the driver of the goods train (Page) to whistle for a signal, and Page said "he saw a white light on the platform." Porter, seeing the stop blocks off, "made sure all was right," and by his order the goods train was drawn out on to the main line, with the result stated above:—

> The express was due at Stourbridge at 5.13 p.m. He did not know how far Stourbridge was from Cradley. He had been engaged at work, and did not notice whether the express had passed or not. That was the reason he asked the driver to whistle for a signal before they went out of the siding. After the whistling for a signal, they said on the engine they saw a white light on the platform, and he saw it as well. He did not see the light waved; it was stationary, as though a man had it in his hand. *He did not know the proper way to signal was to wave the light.* He took the signal from the white light, whether waved or not. *He took no other means to ascertain whether it was a signal or not.* He saw the stop-blocks were off, and thought all was right. He did not move the stop-block.

The inquiry was adjourned to the 21st. inst.

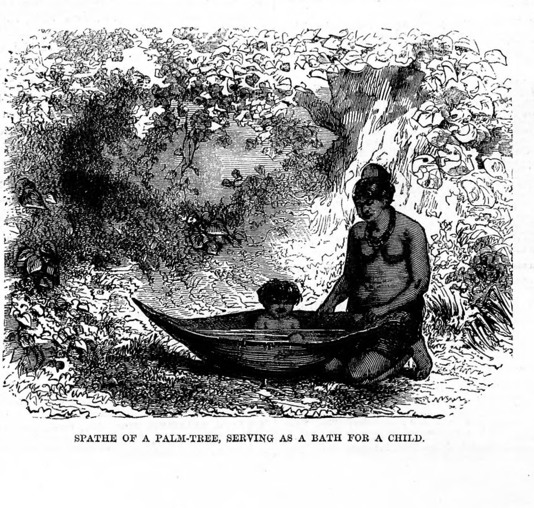
The late Mr. Peabody.—The remains of the late Mr. George Peabody were removed from Westminster Abbey to Portsmouth on Saturday, and from thence embarked in the English ship *Monarch* for Portland, United States. On the arrival of the remains within the dockyard the *Monarch* displayed her ensign half-mast and the American ensign abreast of the foretopmast crosstrees, all the other ships following her motions. The flagship fired 20 guns, at an interval of one minute, commencing when the *Monarch* dipped her ensign, at the expiration of which she rehoisted her ensign and hauled down the American ensign, all the other ships, except the *Monarch*, following her motions. The carrying of the remains from the train to the deck of the *Monarch* was the simplest possible ceremony. There was no procession. The shell, or case, in which the coffin is placed was lifted out of a railway car, specially constructed for the purpose, and was conveyed on men's shoulders, a couple of pall-bearers preceding, and the immediate friends of the deceased following on board, the band of the ship playing "The Dead March," from "Saul," and the officers and men of the *Monarch* arrayed in all their force. The body was placed on a bier under a pavilion on the ship's upper deck, where it remained until the ship departed for sea. During the voyage the body will rest in a mortuary chapel.

THE SUEZ CANAL:

THE VICEROY'S GUESTS AT THE PYRAMIDS.

Our Illustration on the first page represents an interesting part of the Suez Canal rejoicings—the arrival of the caravans with the guests of the Viceroy of Egypt at the foot of the Pyramids. It was an extraordinary sight: tourists from nearly every country, the dark-faced Egyptian and Turks, and the swarthy Arabs, ever on the *qui vive* for an opportunity of making a piastre—honestly, if possible, but at all hazards to get the coin. Never was a stranger spectacle seen in the Desert; never have the Pyramids been scaled by so many distinguished as well as some undistinguished persons. The Franks bribed the Arabs to run up and down the Pyramids until they were worn-out with the fatigue. English readers will rejoice to hear that the children of the Desert were beaten on their own ground by the more agile Highland gamekeeper of the Earl of Dudley. Matched to ascend the Pyramid in less time than an Arab, the sinewy Highland chiel made both ascent and descent ere he was overtaken by his competitor; and his success, no doubt, struck home to the heart of every Briton there.

As to the Canal, we gather from the *Journal de l' Union des Deux Mers* that the traffic from the opening to the 28th—that is, in eleven days, was as follows:—52 vessels arrived from Port Saïd at Lake Timfah between the 17th and 19th of November, and 7 between the 20th and 28th: 51 vessels left Lake Timsah for Suez from the 19th to the 21st, and five from the 22nd to the 28th. The arrivals at Port Saïd from Suez in the interval between the 18th and 28th were 45. Of these vessels 7 were from eastern seas on their way to Europe; 9 were from the Mediterranean on their way to the Indies. The total number of vessels that passed through the Canal during the period referred to was 130, the aggregate tonnage of which was 80,000 tons. The telegram from M. de Lesseps with reference to the passage of these vessels was:—"Notwithstanding this extraordinary traffic, only six vessels touched the ground slightly; of these four got off without aid, and but two required a little assistance to set them afloat. No loss of cargo, no vessel damaged; neither the bottom nor the sides of the Canal injured."



SPATHE OF A PALM-TREE, SERVING AS A BATH FOR A CHILD.

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SPECIAL Advertisements inserted in this column at special rates.

NOTICE.

IN consequence of numerous Complaints from private persons and the trade, that the ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS is only to be obtained with difficulty in London, Messrs. Hatton & Co., beg to state that they have this week OPENED a SPECIAL PUBLISHING OFFICE, at 33, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, under the management of Mr. R. Watson. Henceforth, all the London Agents will be supplied from that office every Friday morning, and the paper can be had there at all times. Country agents may now order through *all the London Agents*, in the same way that they order their London papers. Orders should be given early for the GRAND CHRISTMAS NUMBER, to be published on December 18.

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NOTICE TO THE NEWS TRADE.

Christmas-Day falling on Saturday next,
THE ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS
Will be Published on THURSDAY instead of on
Friday Morning.

NOTICE.

THE ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS IN PARIS AND ON THE CONTINENT.

This paper may now be purchased in Paris at 50 centimes (about 5d.) at the Kiosks, and at the bookstalls on all the French Railways.

M. de Bernardy, 8, Place de la Madeléine, is the Wholesale Agent in Paris; and will supply the paper to regular subscribers in France, Spain Italy, and Switzerland.

TO ADVERTISERS.

A number of advertisements are unavoidably omitted from our present Number. Our correspondents, whom we heartily thank for their favours, are requested to inform us whether we shall publish their announcements in our next issue. In cases where money has been sent with orders, we will return cheques, &c., if desired.

The sale of the *Illustrated Midland News* is increasing largely. The permanent character of the publication makes it a most desirable medium for Advertisements. As we can only devote a limited space to public announcements, advertisers should send their orders not later than Wednesday at noon in each week.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. G. is thanked for the drawings. It is our intention to give Trade Illustrations from time to time, but we must have a voice in the selection of subjects.

ARTIZAN.—In the New Year we shall give Illustrations of some of the chief manufactories in the Midlands.

Celia (Liverpool) is referred to her parents; they are the best advisers she can have under the circumstances.

ADMIRER.—There was a slight mistake in describing the poultry; but the birds were portraits, as also were the other pictures, drawn for us by Mr. W. H. Pigott.

SUBSCRIBER (London).—We are indebted to you for your suggestions.

Mr. John Stephens is thanked for his letter. Will he send his address, or call at 33, Essex-street, Strand? We are at the present moment doing what Mr. S. suggests, and are experiencing the benefit of it already.

The Illustrated Midland News

BIRMINGHAM, DEC. 18, 1869.

THE Rev. DIGBY COTES, Vicar of St. Helen's, Worcester, died this week. He was one of the best theological scholars the Church possessed, an earnest intellectual man, a fine preacher, and a powerful controversialist. He held two "livings;" they were worth about £150 a year together. His memory will be revered in the cathedral city by all who knew and understood his noble nature and his high attainments.

THIS week we publish from the pen and pencil of members of our staff an illustrated sketch of the Birmingham Omnibus Service. Now and then the severe competition in the streets is inconvenient to passengers, a race between several 'buses being no uncommon occurrence in the suburbs. But, on the whole, the drivers and conductors fulfil their duties with care and courtesy. By-and-bye it seems probable that a series of tramways will bring about another change in our system of street locomotion.

The Robin Hood Rifles had a grand ceremony at Nottingham this week. We hope to devote an illustrated page to the event in our next. Lord Napier is to distribute the prizes to the Birmingham volunteers. A grand banquet, given by Colonel Ratcliffe, will give additional *éclat* to the visit of the hero of Magdala. This and other volunteer incidents in the Midlands will not be neglected by our artists.

A MISERS' DEATH.—The other day an old man was found dead in his chair at an hotel in New York. For years he had lived at the hotel, where he occupied a room at the top of the house for the sake of cheapness. He never allowed himself a fire, was always poorly clad, and partook of only one meal a day, and that of the coarsest quality, and in the smallest quantity. In his boxes bonds and securities representing property worth more than £100,000 were found.

NEWS OF THE MIDLANDS.

Several tortoises were offered for sale recently in Melton Mowbray market.

An old and respected inhabitant of Birmingham—Mr. Councillor Jones—died on Tuesday, after a short illness.

Mr. Charles Dickens will distribute the prizes to the students of the Midland Institute, on Thursday, January 6, in the Town Hall, Birmingham.

The Prince of Wales, who has paid another visit to Yorkshire, intends to go to Lord Aveland's estate, in the neighbourhood of Ingoldsby, Lincolnshire, to shoot.

A billiard match, played at Nock's Rooms, Birmingham, between Alfred Reynolds, of the Great Western Hotel, and Henry Beardman, of Nock's Hotel, the former giving 300 out of 1,000, was won by Beardman.

REDUCTION IN THE PRICE OF TIN.—Messrs. Crowley and Parsons, of Ann Street, Birmingham, in their Tuesday's circular announce a reduction of £3 per ton in the price of tin, making common blocks £117, and bar in barrels £118 per ton.

It is complained that the appointment of Mr. Hayman to the head-mastership of Rugby, in succession to Dr. Temple, was "made on grounds other than those of academical distinction or personal fitness." The under-masters intend memorialising the trustees of the school, asking them to re-consider the new appointment.

CHURCH SCHOOLMASTERS' AND SCHOOLMISTRESS'S ASSOCIATION.—From the report of this association, read at the second annual meeting at Birmingham, on Saturday, we learn that there are now 107 subscribers, and that there is a balance in favour of the Birmingham branch of £14 10s. 7d.

Two casualties have been caused by fire at The Lye. Elizabeth Cartwright, aged 12, sat down on a cinder heap, her clothes ignited, and she was burnt to death. Mathew Pritchard had been in the habit of sleeping on an old door in front of his fire. On Saturday night he laid down as usual on the door, some cinders fell on his clothes, and he was seriously but not fatally burnt. He was drunk at the time of the accident.

MURDER NEAR CHELTENHAM.—John Midwinter, a labourer, has been brutally murdered at Winstone, near Cheltenham. With two companions, the deceased left a public-house where they had all been drinking, and the next day Midwinter was found dead in a ditch near the road. There is no evidence criminating the men who were with the deceased. A verdict of wilful murder was returned against some persons unknown.

MR. NEWDEGATE COMPLAINS OF MR. DISRAELI.—At the dinner of the Rugby Agricultural Society, Mr. Newdegate, M.P., said he was not satisfied with the manner in which the Opposition was led. Mr. Disraeli, he urged, seemed to think it sufficient to move amendments without discussing the main principles of the measure to which his friends were opposed. He took amendment after amendment without troubling by argument to enforce them on the House. He sat there, after he left office, the image of resignation seated on a milestone. During the last session the task which would have been undertaken by the Radicals of old fell into the hands of the representative of North Warwickshire. He himself had to defend the right of freedom of assembly and freedom of speech in the House of Commons.

A NEW CHURCH FOR DROITWICH.—The Bishop of Worcester on Tuesday consecrated the new Church of St. Nicholas, Droitwich, which will accommodate 500 persons. Mr. J. Smith is the architect. The new church cost £1,700, and is free from debt. After morning service on the opening day £86 was collected; the total collections will reach £100. Sir John Pakington (whose seat at Westwood is about a mile from Droitwich) presided at a luncheon after the service. He proposed, after the loyal toasts, "The health of the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese," which was responded to by the Lord Bishop of Worcester, who referred to the great interest that had been taken in the erection of the new church by Sir John and Lady Pakington, and to the debt of gratitude owing to them by the people of Droitwich for having thrown open their grounds for holding a bazaar, by means of which the building fund was greatly augmented.

THE EXPLOSION AT BRADLEY FORGE.—The adjourned enquiry into the death of the six men who were killed by the boiler explosion at the Britannia Works, Bradley, was resumed on Monday at Wolverhampton, by Mr. H. Phillips. Mr. T. Holland, one of the proprietors of the works, said, thinking that they were perfectly safe, the firm had deferred the insurance of the boiler till next March, when the annual premiums became due. The engine tender and the boiler makers had never reported that the boiler was in a dangerous condition. In answer to questions put by the jury, the witness said that the original thickness of the plates of the exploded boiler was 7-16ths. The thickest part now was 6-16ths of an inch. Questioned again as to the non-insurance of the three boilers in the new side, he added to his previous explanation that he thought it was an oversight. When he sent for Mr. Thompson to repair the boiler, he did not tell the boiler-maker to do certain repairs, but to generally repair the boiler, and he expected him to make it safe for working. He did not work by the contract, but by the job. Mr. E. Wright, engineer, said the cause of the explosion was a deficiency of water. Some parts of the boiler had been red-hot; and when a steam-boiler was red-hot it would explode. Mr. Marten, engineer to the Midland Boiler Insurance Company, adhered to the opinion he expressed last week—that the cause of the explosion was the weakness of the central tube. After a long consultation, the jury found that the deceased were killed by an explosion of an old and much-worn iron steam boiler; they regretted that a more complete examination of the boiler had not been made by a competent person; and they hoped that a Government inspector would soon have the charge and inspection of such boilers. In the cases of Jones and Dawe, upon whose bodies inquests were held on the same day at Bradley, the jury returned a similar verdict, recommending the company to use boilers of smaller diameter, and heat them with three furnaces instead of one.

At the Birmingham Theatre Royal "Formosa" is being played for the last nights. Everybody should see Jackson Haynes, the skater, whose performance is a most extraordinary one.

The Baptist chapel, Stafford-street, Walsall, was re-opened on Thursday week. The Rev. J. Bunn preached, and £21 6s. 3d. was collected. The cost of rebuilding the chapel is about £1,800.

BISHOP TEMPLE'S FAREWELL SERMON.—Sunday last will be long remembered by both old and young Rugbeians: it was Dr. Temple's last Sunday at Rugby. A highly-appreciative notice of the proceedings is given in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—

> The chapel was unable to contain the crowd of old Rugbeians who attended. Amongst those who were present, both at the morning and afternoon service, were three sons of Arnold. It was Communion Sunday, and an old Rugbeian who was present, and had not been present for a quarter of a century before, remembered that in his time generally the sixth form, with one or two exceptions, and a sprinkling perhaps of from forty to fifty in the best of the school, stayed. To his astonishment yesterday some 230 boys kept their places, and it was touching to see how all of them tried to get to the end of the rails at which the doctor was officiating. He, before commencing the service, standing on the raised altar step, upon Arnold's grave, had said, 'This is the last time I shall receive the holy communion with you as head master of this school. I beg of you all to remember me in your prayers to-day.' The sermon was, as usual, at the afternoon service, following the hymn for the last Sunday before the holidays, which ends,
>
> Let Thy Father-hand be shielding
> All who here shall meet no more,
> May their seed-time past be yielding
> Year by year a richer store.

The singing of this will not be easily forgotten. The reporter says some of the words of the sermon "struck like pistol shots."

A NEW RAILWAY.—There was a large attendance of the supporters of the proposed Dudley, Oldbury, and Birmingham High-Level Station, on Monday, at the Junction Hotel, Oldbury, Mr. Job Taylor presiding. Mr. Owen, explaining the scheme, said if the promoters succeeded, they would provide for the Oldbury people a central station, and one which would afford, by means of "siding," admirable accommodation to the numerous works and manufactories. As at present arranged, he granted that sufficient accommodation would not be afforded to the copper works, and others adjacent; but they pledged themselves, if successful in getting the main line, to make a branch to those works. From the calculations made, they had every reason to believe that it would be a good paying concern. The estimated capital required was £180,000, in £10 shares. If they did not succeed they would return the whole of the money invested, with the exception of 10s. per share. If they succeeded—and they were rather sanguine about it—he might venture to say that the profit would be more than five per cent. It was resolved—"That the gentlemen present, with power to add to their number, be a committee to consider the expediency of co-operating with one already formed in Dudley, in promoting the formation of the Dudley, Oldbury, and Birmingham High-Level Railway Station, as now explained to this meeting."

FUNERAL OF THE DUCHESS D'AUMALE.—The remains of Marie Caroline Auguste de Bourbon, Duchesse d'Aumale, were buried on Friday, in the Roman Catholic chapel, Weybridge, near London. Previous to the formation of the funeral procession, mass was celebrated by Monsignor Weld in the drawing-room of Orleans House, Twickenham, which was appropriately draped as a chapelle ardente. The walls were hung with black velvet, on the rich folds of which, at intervals, the monogram of the Duchess had been gracefully interwoven. On a bier opposite the altar lay the body of her Royal Highness, enclosed in three coffins, the outermost of which bore the following inscription: "Marie Caroline Auguste de Bourbon, Princess de Deux Sicilies, nêe le 26 Avril, 1822, à Vienne, mariée à Naples, le 25 Novembre, 1844, à Henri d'Orléans, Duc d'Aumale, morte à Twickenham, en Angleterre, le 6 Décembre, 1869." Besides the members of the family, the funeral was attended by several ambassadors and other distinguished personages. At Walton Bridge General Dumas received their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, Duke of Cambridge, Prince Christian, and the Prince of Teck, who were subsequently present at the chapel, her Majesty being represented by Lord Charles Fitzroy. The remains of the Duchesse were laid near those of the late King and Queen of the French, in the Roman Catholic Chapel at Weybridge. The shops at Twickenham, Richmond, Teddington, and Kingston, as well as those at Evesham, Worcestershire, were closed on Friday. The Belgian Court has gone into mourning for four weeks.

FINED FOR INFRINGING THE FACTORY ACT.—Messrs. Colbourn and Sons, of Park-lane, Tipton, were charged on Tuesday, before Mr. Spooner, at the Wednesbury Police Court, with several offences, by Mr. Blenkinsop, Inspector of Factories. The first charge was that of employing, on the 12th November, at Tipton, at a certain blast furnace, a child, named Cornelius White, who was under thirteen years of age, at night, contrary to the statute. The second charge was for having, on the 12th November, employed Joseph Millington, a child under twelve years of age, at night; and the third charge, for having, on the 19th November, employed the said Joseph Millington without a surgical certificate, as required by the Act. One of the members of the firm attended, and said they had offended inadvertently. In fining the defendants, Mr. Spooner said he could not conceive a worse offence. It was perfectly clear to him that the persons employing children in this manner were parents themselves, and he would ask the defendant in this case if he would like that his own growing child, from twelve to thirteen years of age, should be employed at such hard work as this during the night.—Defendant said he admitted it was not right.—Mr. Spooner said he thought it was a terrible crime, and he should therefore fine defendant £5 and costs in each case, being the fullest sum he could impose. He felt it to be his duty to inflict such a penalty, considering the fact that defendant, and those who represented him, had had full warning of the effect of the Act of Parliament. Defendant would be fined in two of the cases, and not in the one where he had neglected to obtain a surgical certificate, as the penalties would be heavy enough without that.

"OUT OF THE SHOW."—At the last meeting of the Wolverhampton Board of Guardians, the Clerk announced that the mother having sent the necessary money, the child Harris, who had claimed refuge from the wandering musician, had been sent to Devonshire, and that the following letter had been received from the mother of the girl Harris:—"I am writing to thank you for the great care that you have taken of my child. She arrived here (Teignmouth) quite safe. I am very sorry that I should have been so foolish as to let her go with that man. He promised to take the greatest care of her; and at that time I was rather poor. My sister was living at Exeter, where the man and his wife were staying, and he asked her if she knew of a child who would be a companion to his wife. At that time I did not know that they went about from street to street singing, or I never should have let her go with them. If I had the means I would try and have that wicked man punished for his ill-treatment of the child, who seems very grateful for the kind treatment at the Union. I am only too thankful to think that I have her under my care again."

THE CHURCH AT WOLVERHAMPTON.—On Monday the churchwardens of St. George's, Wolverhampton, had, by request of his lordship, an interview with the Bishop of Lichfield, respecting the differences between the Vicar of St. George's and his parishioners. The interview took place at the Deanery, the residence of Mr. W. Parke, and, in addition to Mr. C. Matthews and Mr. J. Mead, the churchwardens, the Rural Dean, Rev. J. H. Iles, and the Rev. A. S. Prior, the vicar of St. George's, were present. After a conversation between the churchwardens (who informed his lordship that they would be prepared to lay the whole matter before him on a future day) and the Bishop, the latter said when he went to New Zealand he left the parish so peaceful, the parishioners so content with their new pastor, and he so content with them and their ways, that he was surprised indeed to learn of the dissensions that had sprung up between them.—Mr. Prior said at the first period of time to which his lordship referred he did not contemplate any alteration in the services, but when he visited the lower end of his parish, where his people had not previously resided, and found eight or nine thousand of his flock so spiritually destitute, he felt that he must do something to attract their attendance upon public worship.—The Churchwardens said this statement differed from one Mr. Prior had previously made to them, to the effect that he had from the first contemplated such changes, but having regard to the ministry that had preceded his own, he had wished to act judiciously, and make no movement for the first twelvemonths.—The Bishop said he could only recognise parishioners in the matter; and thought that as Mr. Matthews did not live in the parish, a Court, in the event of legal proceedings, would not recognise him as churchwarden.—Mr. Matthews thought that would be rather consolatory than otherwise.—After some further conversation, his Lordship said that immediately after the ordination he would arrange for a meeting with the deputation that had been appointed to wait upon him, and asked to be previously furnished with the heads of the matters they proposed to bring before him. He trusted that in the meantime dissension would cease, and that no more meetings would be held.—The Churchwardens expressed a hope that the vicar would do nothing to call for a meeting, and took their leave.—On Sunday morning there was an unpleasant scene in the church, in consequence of the preacher ascending the pulpit in the surplice. A week previous several of the congregation had left the church in the morning owing to the Vicar's discontinuing the use of the black gown and assuming the surplice, and on Sunday forenoon last the greater part of the congregation in the body of the church left their seats on the preacher appearing in the pulpit. It was not the Vicar on this occasion, but the Rev. A. B. Hilliard, curate of St. John's. The rev. gentleman was, however, afterwards informed that the proceeding did not arise out of any disrespect to him, but simply from the objection of the congregation to the wearing of the surplice in the pulpit—a change which had been brought about without their sanction or consent. Mr. Prior has discontinued the use of the surplice pending the present proceedings.

The *Musical Standard* hears that the Norwich Musical Festival is to be held in future every second year, instead of triennially, as at present.

A halfpenny morning newspaper is about to start in the north of England. It is to be called the *Northern Echo*. This is a disgraceful piece of plagiarism. The proprietors of the new paper had the effrontery to ask the *Echo* people to notice their bantling!

A sad event took place at the Théatre Angoulême a short time since. Just before the performance the stage manager fired a pistol at an actress (a singer), who died almost instantaneously. The carpenter to the theatre received a second shot intended for the lady, and was killed upon the spot. The young lady was only twenty-seven years of age.—*Musical Standard.*

DR. TEMPLE AND THE BISHOPS.—According to the *Western Morning News*, seven bishops will probably join in the protest against the consecration of Dr. Temple. Bishop Wilberforce has not yet decided if he will sign the protest, but he has declined to take part in the consecration. Even Bishop Thirlwall has refused to be present at the service, feeling that, as he had joined in the condemnation of "Essays and Reviews" in Convocation, he cannot now be a party to the elevation of Dr. Temple. A memorial, signed by 29 clergymen and 300 laymen of Bristol, has been sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The memorialists implore his Grace to consider the responsibility of consecrating Dr. Temple, and express sorrow and indignation at the admission to the ministry of the Church of persons who either hold Roman doctrines, or question the authority of the Holy Scripture.

EXTRAORDINARY CURE OF A COUGH BY POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANNISEED.—"Her Majesty's Gun Boat, "Netley," Wick, North East Coast of Scotland, 7th September, 1868.—Dear Sir,—Having had a most distressing and severe cough, which caused me many sleepless nights and restless days, I was recommended by his Lordship, the Earl of Caithness, to try your most invaluable Balsam of Anniseed, and I can assure you, with the first dose I found immediate relief, even without having to suspend my various duties; and the first small bottle completely cured me; therefore I have the greatest confidence in fully recommending it to the million. Most respectfully yours, W. LINZEL, H.M.G.B. "Netley,"—To Mr. Powell. POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANNISEED can be had of all Chemists. In Bottles at 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 3d. Warehouse, 16, Blackfriars Road, London. Ask for "POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANNISEED." [267

THE GOSSIP.

Cardiff is to have an Exhibition of Arts and Industry next year.

Verdi is busily engaged on his new opera, "Patrié."

Gounod is putting the finishing touches to his "Franceso da Rimini."

Her Majesty's Theatre will open with Italian opera in February.

Miss Bateman enjoys the sole right of playing "Mary Warner" in America.

Messrs. Langford and J. C. Tildesley are engaged upon a History of Staffordshire.

An Art auctioneer advertises for sale an assortment of "speculative pictures."

Mr. Tennyson's new volume "The Holy Grail, and other poems," is published this week.

The pantomime at Covent-garden is to be "The Yellow Dwarf," written by H. J. Byron.

Mr. Fechter has been playing *Hamlet* and *Ruy Blas* at the Princess's.

The *maître-de-ballet* at the Grand Opéra, Paris, has accepted an engagement at the Alhambra.

Wat Tyler, M.P., will be the new Christmas burlesque, by Mr. Sala, for the Gaiety Theatre.

Jenny Lind, Sims Reeves, and Santley are to sing together in America shortly.

Fechter will appear at Niblo's, New York, in January.

A new Oriental burlesque by H. J. Byron, founded on the ballad of "Lord Bateman," is in preparation for the Globe Theatre.

The *Church Herald*, which was announced to suspend its issue, on account of the tone of the articles, has resumed publication.

We go from home to hear news. An American paper says a funeral hymn by the Rev. Dr. Neale, called "Safe Home," is in vogue at English funerals.

There has just been published a Japanese history of the British Parliament, compiled from Hallam and other authorities.

The *Echo* has written a birthday article. The paper is a success. Various rumours put the cost of success down at £60,000.

"Christopher Kenrick" has been republished in America. *Putnam's Magazine* (New York) reviews the book in high terms of praise.

Cuthbert Bede, who made such a tremendous success with "Verdant Green," has written a new humorous story for *The Illustrated Midland News*.

Two unpublished plays by Thomas Hood are to be issued—"York and Lancaster" and "Lost and Found."

Mr. Toole appeared at the Gaiety on Monday in Mr. H. J. Byron's new drama, "Uncle Dick's Darling."

Mr. Arthur Sullivan's "Prodigal Son" was given at the Crystal Palace on Saturday, for the first time since the oratorio was produced at Worcester.

Lady Don, who is playing at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, is in ill health. She was taken off the stage in a fainting condition the other night.

The little town of Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham, is to have a newspaper, partly-printed in London, of course, and partly in Birmingham.

The Rev. D. Silvan Evans is about to bring out a *Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, compiled from original sources.

The much quoted satire in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "The True Story of Mrs. Shakespeare's Life," is not by Mr. Shirley Brooks, as reported, but by a lady.

Patti has declined an offer of a million of francs to sing for ten months in the new serious opera which Offenbach has composed to a libretto by Sardon.

Norman-Neruda, the lady violinist, has met with great success in the Gewandhaus concert in Leipsic. She is announced to appear in Birmingham.

Mr. G. Tomline, M.P. for Great Grimsby, has had a Murillo, "The Pool of Bethesda," engraved, and after taking a few copies for friends, he has presented the plate to the Newspaper Press Fund.

Messrs. Robert Cocks and Co. state that they do not put any restrictions upon the singing of their copyright songs, duets, &c., at concerts, penny readings, or any other entertainments.

It is often a subject of wonder "where all the newspapers go 'to." There is a little paper called *The Weekly Budget*, full of sensational tales, that sells nearly 200,000 a week, chiefly in Lancashire.

The academic year of the Royal Academy terminated on Friday night, when Sir F. Grant distributed the prizes. Mr. Brock, of Worcester, who is in Mr. Foley's studio, and whose "Salmacis" we engraved some time ago, took the second prize for modelling from the figure.

Boucicault (says an American paper) has *written* over 150 theatrical pieces, and his literary income amounts to over 50,000 dollars yearly. "Adapted for the stage," our Transatlantic contemporary should say, not "written."

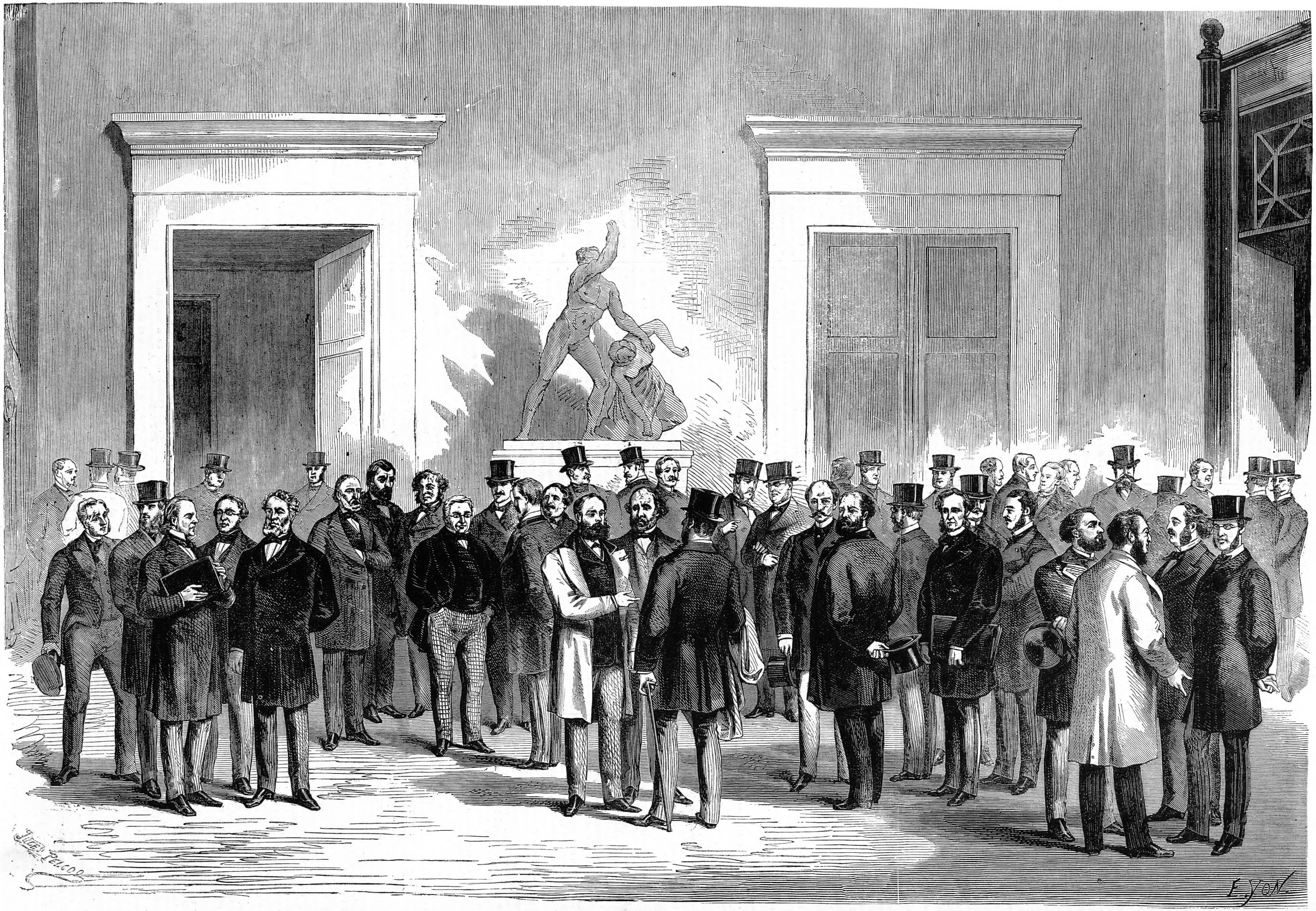
English managers are to be out-distanced by their French *confréres*. It is said that in the forthcoming *revue* at the Châtelet, a real locomotive engine will issue, propelled by steam, from a tunnel, and will drag a train, containing forty individuals, seventy metres across the stage.

Hitherto no Jews have been admitted to any Austrian university as professors. This prohibition has now been removed, and the first Jewish professor has been appointed in the person of Dr. Mauthner, who has obtained the chair of ophthalmic surgery in the University of Innsbruck.

The *Academy* says arrangements are in progress on the part of the Royal Academy of Arts for an exhibition of pictures by old masters, to be borrowed from various private collections in England, and exhibited in the rooms of the Academy at Burlington House during the first months of 1870.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Paper understands that Dr. Shelton Mackenzie, the literary editor of the Philadelphia *Press*, is busy finishing a work to be entitled "The True History of Lord Byron's Married Life." It cannot fail to be very interesting, as the doctor occupies in the American world of letters much the same position that Dr. Samuel Johnson did a century ago in England.

A new burlesque called "Abon Hassan; or, an Arabian Knight's Entertainment," has been produced at the Charing-cross Theatre. It is written by Mr. Arthur O'Neil. The *Telegraph* says of it "the very worst of such productions would appear a subtle combination of ingenuity and wit if brought into comparison with 'Abon Hassan.'" The Prince of Wales and the Nawab of Bengal were present at the first representation.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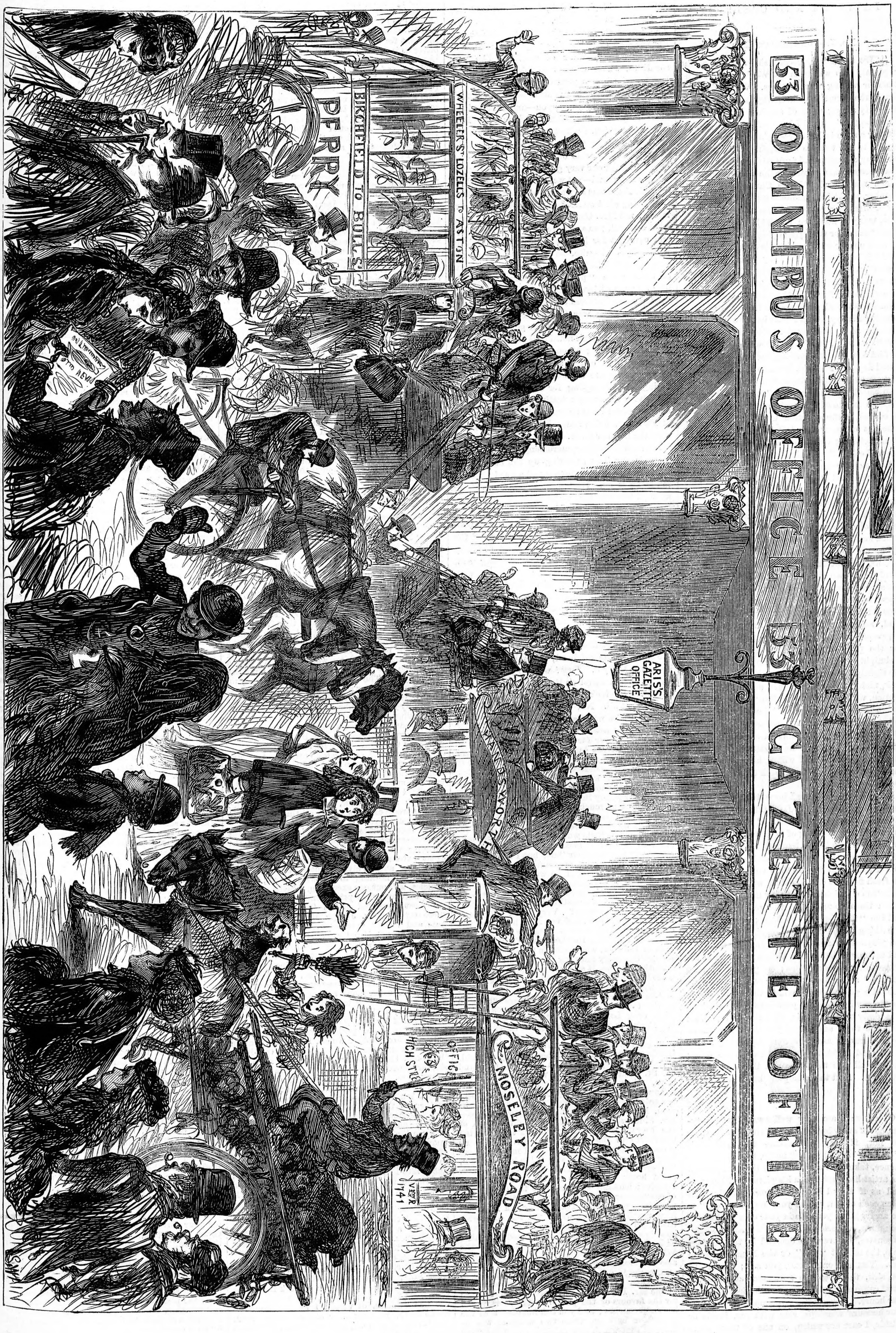
THE ENTRANCE HALL OF THE CORPS LEGISTATIF. *(See page 252.)*


53 OMNIBUS OFFICE 53 GAZETTE OFFICE
WHEELER ST LOZELLS TO ASTON
BIRCHFIELD TO BULL'S
PERRY
ARIS'S GAZETTE OFFICE
HANDSWORTH
MOSELEY ROAD
OFFICE 53 HIGH STR
YEAR 1741

SKETCHES IN THE MIDLANDS BY DAYLIGHT AND GASLIGHT.—BIRMINGHAM 'BUSES. (*See page 258.*)

SKETCHES IN THE MIDLANDS

BY

DAYLIGHT AND GASLIGHT.

No. I.—BIRMINGHAM 'BUSES.

"'We are a busy people, sir,' said one of the captains, who was from the West, 'and have no time for reading mere notions. We don't mind 'em if they come to us in newspapers along with almighty strong stuff of another sort, but darn your books.'" Shall I be treading on anybody's toes, or on the tail of anybody's coat, or exposing myself to the terrible onslaught of any penman who may choose to find fault with me, if I confess that to my mind a parallel to the Western captain, whom readers of "Martin Chuzzlewit" will remember, might be found in many a Black Country town, in many a remote midland village, in, I am sure, many a northern hamlet? Will anybody denounce me for venturing to hint at the existence of such a state of things in this enlightened age? Shall I be anathematised by "bell, book, and candle" for putting such a suspicion on paper, and thus for ever placing it beyond the possibility of eradication? If I thought so, the record should be blotted out ere the ink with which it is written is dry. But I take leave to hold to the correctness of the assertion that, in this nineteenth century, despite our boasted advance in civilization, notwithstanding our National Educational Leagues and Conferences and Mutual Improvement Societies, the sentiment of the captain who hailed "from the West," as printed by Mr. Dickens in one of his most famous works, would be echoed, if the question were put to them by nine out of every ten toilers in the wonderful manufacturing districts which in the aggregate are well called the Black Country.

I am not speaking from hearsay, or from what I have read and others have written, but from my own experience. Being at a large foundry in the county of Stafford not more days ago than you can count on your two hands, I asked the proprietor of the works, from the tall chimneys of which smoke was belching forth, and sparks were flying up like the scintillations of a thousand rockets, what description of literature the sinewy sturdy workmen most affected. The answer did not surprise me. There was a good library in the place, but the men hardly used it; they had "no time for reading mere notions." What they did read, and with considerable avidity, was the *newspaper*, more especially that journal which, for the price of one penny, gives its readers "almighty strong stuff," accompanied by what are rightly termed "sensational" pictures. My task, under editorial guidance and editorial suggestion, will be, whilst avoiding "strong stuff," and eschewing "kid-gloved" descriptions, to lay before the tolerant reader, according to the best of my power, some account of social life in the Midlands by daylight and gaslight; the distinguishing features of which, however, will be the illustrations that from week to week will accompany the text.

In successive sketches I hope to introduce the reader to both High and Low Life—to take him in the spirit among the smoke of a hundred furnaces and the clinking of a thousand hammers, and to show him life in its most striking aspects. Together we will wander in search of adventure. Don Quixote and Sancho shall not be more eager for fresh fields to conquer than we will be for new pastures on which to regale our minds. We will watch them counting up the golden sovereigns and the "flimsies" at the Bank; have, we hope, something more than a peep behind the scenes of the playhouse; mark the criminal in the dock and the magistrate on the Bench; look in at the dinner and supper rooms; be present at both "High" and "Low" Church services when we would be good; see (provided the potentates of the Press will accord us permission) the working of a daily newspaper in all its varied phases; visit the town and country markets; put in an appearance on 'Change; accompany the night mail in its mad flight to the North or to the West; and see all else that is worth the seeing in the Midlands. And the prompter shall e'en ring up at once.

Of course I am very well aware that ninety-nine out of every hundred readers of these sketches are not, if they will excuse the expression, "'busists," and that they never, by any possible chance, take their seat in one of the vehicles that the artist has depicted in his picture. I know, as well as if I had been told confidentially, that when each of you "take your walks abroad," to use an Irishism, you ride in your own equipage—brougham, chariot, landau, "Abyssinian" wagonette, or even, to descend in the carriage scale, the modest "gig" or the humbler spring cart. You hate omnibuses, you say; they make you sick, they produce giddiness, and are the direct cause of your taking an antibilious pill every four hours. Nevertheless, you must, an' it please your honours' worships, ride with me, inside or outside, I care not which, on one of these same 'buses that you inwardly despise and outwardly contemn. We will take whichsoever route you please. You have a weakness in favour of the Moseley-road? Very well, dear sir, or madame, or (better) mademoiselle, Moseley-road be it. And let us start from the office in High-street. For the sake of preventing unpleasantness, and to steer entirely clear of anything like personalities, which will not be tolerated in these Illustrated columns, you may rest assured—I will suppose you to be "in an office"—a "city gent," as the cabbies would term you—and anxious to be home to your half-past five o'clock tea. It is horribly plebeian, I admit—low and vulgar in the extreme—to take tea at this hour; but for the nonce let us put aside our aristocracy, and cast in our lot with our very good friends the People. We are not proud—not we, i' faith. Free and independent citizens as we are, who is to hinder us from doing what we list? Not public opinion, certainly; not Mrs. Grundy, believe me—let her say what she will, you and I are secure in *our* nobility, and care not for her gossipings; and speaking personally, and quite, be it understood, on my own account, I incline to the belief that to be one of these same "people" is almost equal to being, say, a cotton "lord," or one of those rich shoddy manufacturers who sprang into existence during the great war time across the Atlantic, and are for ever scattering their gold where it is not wanted. I think nothing is more creditable, or more satisfying to one's vanity, than to be known as and called a Working Man. But, of course, we are all working men now-a-days, toiling and struggling for Fame and Fortune, though for the one it is fleeting, and for the other, why, be we as rich as Crœsus, or possess the purse of Fortunus, believe me, dear sirs, we should be none the happier for it.

But see whither these moralisings lead us! Look! there is our 'bus careering up the busy High-street as fast as three horses and a good "whip" can make it go. Hasten, my friend—quick, or we shall lose the 'bus, which is fast disappearing in the gloom of the December evening. You are a Conservative, and must look at the latest telegraphic despatch posted in the windows of the *Gazette* office? Rubbish! that sheet of flimsy can have no interest for you, a non-betting man, who never staked more than half-a-crown with your cousin on the issue of the Derby or Oaks, when you lost the gloves and forgot the young lady's measure, for which she has never forgiven you. That bit of paper contains merely the record of to-day's racing at Pogis-on-Stoke; here are the numbers—Licensed Fiddler's Cup: five started. Ratcatcher 1, Queen of the Vale 2, Rampant Molly 3. *Peste!* why do you pinch my arm? you had a fiver on Rampant Molly? Never mind—better luck next time; or, better still, don't bet at all. No; there is nothing else in the window of the newspaper office. Editors don't put their best news in the window to be stared at and gloated over for nothing. If you want to know what Great Luxembourgs are doing, how Consols left off after official hours, the price of wheat at Manchester, or what the *rédacteur* has to say upon the Eastern Question, you must wait until to-morrow's sun has risen, and then invest your penny in a *Gazette* or *Post*.

I thought as much. Your loitering to glance through the betting record has lost us the 'bus, and we shall have to wait half-an-hour for the next. The little waiting room where we take our seat is full; it looks very much as though everybody had lost their 'bus; but I suppose that can't be. We would propound the question to the urbane Mr. Busby if he were here, which he isn't; and the gentleman in charge does not appear to be of the urbanest. But let that pass. You want to know something about the history of Birmingham buses? Very well; e'en be it so. Open your ears, and you shall hear what you shall hear, whilst we are passing this *quart d'heure de Rabelais* waiting for the 'bus. To the Young Man of the Day, who, living in the suburbs, looks for his 'bus every morning as regularly as for his matutinal muffin, it seems impossible to suppose a period when his favourite vehicle was not. And yet that time is not so very distant. Five-and-thirty years ago omnibuses were unknown in the town of Birmingham. Forty-one years since even London was without a single bus. In Paris they had managed these things differently. Waterloo was fresh in men's mouths, the French yet raved savagely of the Goddems' luck on the famous Belgian field, and *Le Petit Caporal* was in exile on the island of St. Helena, which he was never to leave alive, when a certain Monsieur Lafitte inaugurated the omnibus system in Paris and was rewarded by a great success. It was an Englishman, however, who built M. Lafitte's 'buses—Mr. Shillibeer, who in 1829 thought so well of the French gentleman's plan, that he started omnibuses in the metropolis. Mr. Shillibeer's success operated on the provincial mind, and ere long the 'bus system was adopted in Birmingham. The great Midland metropolis, previous to 1834, could boast of nothing in the way of cheap vehicles; hackney coaches were the only means of conveyance. Of these, I believe, the principal proprietor was "old" Thomas Pugh, a Birmingham worthy, who, as was often the case with coachmen and coach proprietors in past days, combined the business of a licensed victualler with his hackney-coach trade, and kept the Wheatsheaf Inn, New-street. "Old" Thomas also let mourning-coaches on hire, and thus he was, perhaps, one of the best-known traders of the period. Thomas Pugh had, however a rival in one Mr. Payne, who competed with Thomas for the favours of the public so far as regarded hackney-coaches; and you can imagine that the opposition between these two worthies was as fierce as that which now exists between the "old original" 'bus-proprietors and the bran-new company started a few months ago. At the time I speak of, the coaches of Pugh and Payne stood on the New-street stand, and were well patronised, albeit your Birmingham man had no need to rush about in the manner which now characterises him. Those were the days when the fight for existence was not one tenth part as bitter as it is now; when the rail had not made London as accessible as Kidderminster to Midlanders; *and when blackberries grew at the top of New-street!* You will hardly believe that before Pugh and Payne commenced the trade, Birmingham could not boast of more than three hackney-coaches, a number increased by 1823 to five coaches, owned by Messrs. Wright, Still, and Pugh. Mr. Benjamin Wright subsequently came to grief. He kept the Hope and Anchor inn, Coleshill-street, and, for some reason with which I am unacquainted, cut his throat whilst landlord of that hostelry,

I have seen an illustration of the first English omnibus, which began running in London in the month of July, 1829, "amid," says the chronicler, "the jeers and howls of the hackney-coachmen," who, even as Othello found his occupation gone after persuading himself into the belief of his wife's unfaithfulness to him, saw their chances of earning a livelihood seriously imperilled by the new order of things. These first London 'buses were very comfortable, roomy, and beautifully fitted up, accommodating some twenty-two passengers inside. But there were no box-seats, and the now popular "knife-board" had yet to be invented, as it was in 1849. In the year 1834 the first omnibus began to run in Birmingham town; Mr. John Smith, who lived at the Malt Shovel, in Smallbrook-street, having the credit of commencing the new industry. The first 'bus ran from the Bristol-road toll-gate to the Swan Inn, Snow-hill, which was where the Great Western Railway Station stands now. Mr. Smith's conveyance was constructed to hold twelve persons inside, no one riding on the top with the exception of the driver; and it was drawn by two horses. But although I have awarded to Mr. Smith whatsoever merit there may be in this matter of introducing the first omnibus into the Midland Capital, the originality of the design is claimed by Mr. Holmes, of Cannon-street, who tells me that he was the first to suggest the idea to Mr. Smith, and that he actually purchased in London the omnibus which ran for the first time in Birmingham in 1834; that vehicle being one that had previously done duty between Clapton and London. The fare from the toll-gate in the Bristol-road to Snow-hill was sixpence, whether you rode all the way or not; there was no intermediate stopping-place where you could alight on payment of twopence or threepence, though, of course, passengers might get down where they chose. Smith's enterprise prospered. He had led an active life as guard of the Sheffield mail, and was well versed in the mysteries of coaching and 'busing. You may be sure a rival soon appeared in the omnibus field. Smith's venture was yet in its infancy, and increasing, we may suppose, in prosperity, when John Doughty, then in business as a fishmonger in the High Street, began running a 'bus to Edgbaston, and soon afterwards the new mode of conveyance became so favourably regarded that a company was formed, to which was given the title "The Midland Omnibus Company." The appetite for omnibus riding once created was for a time insatiable. The good folk of Handsworth, determined not to be left behind by their neighbours of Edgbaston, established what was called "The Conveyance Company," having as their manager Mr. Suffolk, who formerly kept the Beehive Inn, Bull-street. There were now too many 'buses for the requirements of of the town; the companies' enterprise first languished, then proved a dead failure; the vehicles stopped running, and for some time Birmingham was without any company's 'buses. Then Mr. Pritchard ran a 'bus from New Street to the "Plough and Harrow," Edgbaston, charging. like his predecessors, sixpence all the way, and no intermediate fare.

But better times were now in store for 'bus proprietors, and better accommodation for the Birmingham public. In 1846 there was a great extension of omnibus traffic. 'Buses ran to Dudley and Wolverhampton, but the companies had nothing to do with them; all the vehicles, without one exception, I believe, at that time, were owned by private individuals. One of the most respected of the 'bus proprietors of those days was Mr. Joseph Brookes, who now, hale and hearty, presides over the large coach establishment in Hurst-street, Birmingham. Mr. Brookes started a 'bus on the Bristol Road in 1846—the "golden age," as it may be called, of 'buses—experimenting in the first instance with a vehicle drawn by one horse, carrying nine inside and four outside passengers. This was the only public conveyance running on the Bristol-road. But nothing that is "one-horsed" ever did or ever will suit the great British public, who, even if they are going the last journey possible on this earth, prefer being drawn by two horses, as Mr. Brookes would, I am sure, confirm by his own experience. So he put on a two-horse 'bus, and shortly after Mr. Hughes set up a similar conveyance to Moseley, at the same sixpenny fare. From this date 'buses grew and multiplied; the town was overrun by them. One vehicle ran to Handsworth, and was owned by a brother to that John Doughty who had long before started an Edgaston 'bus. He was unsuccessful, and was succeeded by Mr. Perrins, who ran the 'bus from Hagley Road, the well-known Mr. Tolley taking his business some years afterwards. *Apropos* to this, it will interest many to be told that the first Hansom cab was introduced into Birmingham in 1849 by Mr. Brookes, twelve months before a similar vehicle was seen in the town, and that he had to stand the criticisms and sarcasms for which the cab fraternity enjoy a *specialité*. From the above date I cannot learn that there is anything particular to record until the advent of the company's new 'buses last summer. The new vehicles made a commotion in the town that will not soon be forgotten. The streets resounded with the cries of the conductors of rival 'buses; you were waylaid, and, willy nilly, forced into somebody's 'bus, with somebody's luggage; and for a week the 'buses were town talk. Mr. Busby, the proprietor of the new vehicles, of which, I believe, there are about forty, running over almost every road, is a Liverpool man of great enterprise and shrewd business qualifications, who deserves the thanks of the 'bus-riding community for his efforts to accommodate them with comfortable vehicles, good and safe 'buses, and reasonable fares. Some other time, perhaps, Mr. Busby, like Barkis, being willing, I may have something to say with special reference to the new company, and their chief proprietor. So far as I can glean, the 'buses and their proprietors supplementary to those of the company are these:—Yardley (Mr. Heath), Balsall Heath to Moseley (Mr. Hamblin, partly in conjunction with the company; Sparkbrook (Mr. Whitehouse), Handsworth and Birchfield (Mr. Mayner), Harborne (Mr. Taylor and Mr. Turner), Edgbaston (Mr. Buller), West Bromwich (Mr. Duffield), Aston (Mr. Allsop). Bloomsbury and Washwood Heath (Mr. Chapman), Handsworth, Mr. Tolley. Which ends the record.

I declare, whilst we have been gossiping anent the old 'buses, the time has flown so rapidly that our omnibus in which we are going to Moseley this bitter cold night has filled; and I would as lief be dropped down at night in the midst of the Black Country furnaces as ride on the "knife-board" when the thermometer is below freezing point, with the wind howling like a hundred thousand demons escaped from below! No; let us struggle to get a couple of places inside. Ha! there is room for one in the corner—so sit you down; and I am sure the young lady with the chignon and the saucy little hat perched on the very top of her head will oblige me by sitting a little closer to the lady next to her. I told you so; there is room and to spare; though how, in the name of Shillibeer, whose patronymic we ought all to hold in the greatest reverence any admiration, we are to accommodate this old ladd with a huge parcel in one hand and a carpet-bag in the other, I am at a loss to conceive. And the fair girl behind the old lady—where shall we find room for her? Do you ask such a question? Gallantry forbid that we should sit comfortably ensconced in this warm corner of the 'bus when Beauty stands shivering on the door-step. "Will any gentleman oblige a lady?" Certainly, most polite of conductors, whose civility gratifies me morning after morning, whilst it fills my fellow male-passengers' minds with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Certainly, I am going outside—no thanks, madam, pray; I hate riding inside; in fact, I live only to ride on the top of an omnibus in inclement weather!

If you think that I shall be prevented from giving you any account of the "insides," just because I am riding on the "knifeboard," and therefore out of their sight, I beg to say you are making a great mistake. I have but to command, to wave my inky wand, and without further ceremony Asmodeus unroofs the 'bus for me, and I can see and hear all within. Behold! as Professor Anderson would say, "the trick is done"—"there is no deception, ladies and gentlemen; look for yourselves!" There are fourteen of us altogether; on each side "we are seven," though none of us rejoice in the possession of "little porringers" in which to carry our suppers about with us, as did the tiny girl in Wordsworth's most delightful poem. It is Saturday night, and we have all been to market. To that circumstance may be due the fact that everybody is twice as bulky as on any other evening. The gentleman next to me, who is too evidently troubled with asthma, who, without having bells on his fingers and bells on his toes, leaves a peppermintish odour wherever he goes, and who, with the best intentions, I have no doubt, invites us all round to "take one"—the "one" being that popular form of sweetmeat known in the trade and nursery as a "bull's-eye"—this gentlemen, I say, smiles benignantly upon us, and (also with the best intentions) insists on treading on everybody's toes when he gets out, as he does, I am rejoiced to say, before we have finished our journey. The elderly lady, who carries as much luggage as though she were going on a visit to the Continent, and who must be elastic, or she never could have got through the door of the 'bus, you all know; you know also that, whether she is in the train or in the omnibus, she can never find her ticket or her threepence, which, after a search extending over about fifteen minutes, she discovers in her left-hand glove. Is it necessary that I should say more than a passing word concerning the two inevitable young ladies who always locate themselves in the farthest corner of the 'bus, and keep up a perpetual conversation on nothing in particular, though you may be sure that you do not escape criticism in some shape or another? And the gentleman who makes a most determined endeavour to read his *Echo* by the uncertain light of the 'bus-lamps, and who fails dismally in the attempt? And the Young Man of the Day (I should more properly call him, perhaps, the Young Man of "Day's"), with the sham diamond, and the pomatumed, curly looks, and the loud tie, and the glossy hat, and the patent-leather boots on this muddy night? You know them all as well as I do—better, perhaps, for you may have seen them oftener than your humble servant to command, who, like everybody else, only rides in 'buses when John the coachman forgets to bring round the roan mare and the carriage, and when all the cabs are engaged.

Although I fear I have wearied you with my meanderings through 'bus history, I must crave your attention for a moment to speak of the "outsides." From the top of the 'bus you get a better insight into the ways of the town than from any other point. In the daytime you see names of places, shops, and streets that you had never dreamt of, and are made acquainted with the interiors of apartments that were never intended to come within your inspection. As for reading "on the cheap," you have only to invest twopence in a ride on an omnibus to enjoy a perfect feast of wall-literature: what is going on at the theatres and at the music-halls, the date of the next fashionable concert, the railway fare to the Cannibal Islands and back, where to go for your Christmas presents, the name of the paper which boasts "the largest circulation in the world," the contents of *Post*, *Gazette*, and *Illustrated Midland News*—all this and more information lies before the "outsides," who on another page will find their portraits. And when the writer of this paper reflects upon the time it took the smart artist who accompanied him to draw the picture, to say nothing of the engraving and printing, the charge made for this number is as great a surprise to him as the attention paid by rival conductors is to the old lady struggling in the crowd at the 'bus office in High-street.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

The Kingsbury Meeting was remarkable for nothing but the *fiasco* in the Great Metropolitan. A field of seven came to the post for this race, including Moose, Q. C., Roving Maid, Whitehall, and the notorious Fan. The last-named, who is a lengthy grand looking mare, as usual refused the first fence, but cleared it at the second attempt. She, however, obstinately declined the next jump, at which Q. C. fell, and thus two of the seven were disposed of. Whitehall led over the fourth fence, which all the rest refused, and though Lymington was eventually got over, nothing else could be induced to jump. We were thus entertained with the edifying spectacle of several really high-class steeple chasers completely "pounded" at a four-foot fence, and it took nearly half-an-hour to get some of them out of the field. This sort of thing is sure to happen occasionally, now that nearly all our steeplechasers are "converted" flat racers. We wonder what the vetran Tom Oliver would have said, had he been at Kingsbury? By the way, Tom is in great feather at Wroughton just now. He has a string of fifteen horses under his care; but, unfortunately, he is very lame, from the effects of a severe kick on the thigh, which he received some little time back, from Thornapple.

The long-advertised sale of Sir Charles Legard's stud resolved itself into a thorough weeding-out, as Vespasian, Border Knight, Guy Dayrell, and Lady Colsterdale were all bought in. Of those that actually changed hands, Islam (800 gs.) fetched the highest price. Sir Charles gave Mr. Chaplin just 100 gs. more for him in the spring, and on both occasions we think he realised about three times his value. Blinkhoolie (615 gs.) was decidedly cheap; but Swift (470 gs.) seemed so completely "stumped up" when last in public, that he will prove no bargain. Braemar (420 gs.) was not dear, and Silenus (300 gs.) was sold "at an alarming sacrifice," as Sir Charles Legard gave a thousand for him during the Brighton week. A draft of Reeves's horses also came to the hammer, and six were sold at low prices; Paté was bought in for 700 gs.

Just twenty years ago, a very valuable prize was offered by the Pacha of Egypt, in order to promote a contest between English and Arab horses. The Jockey Club took up the matter warmly, but could not induce a single owner to run the risk and incur the expense of sending a portion of his stud to the East. The present Khedive of Egypt is a great patron of racing, and annually gives large sums to be run for, though his generosity is rather marred by the fact that he invariably wins back his own money with some fifth-rate horse imported from England. Several of our large owners of racehorses have lately cast longing eyes on the rich prizes of the East, and it is said that Mr. Brayley is fitting out an expedition for the purpose of "spoiling the Egyptians," by the aid of Arlington, Silvermere, and one or two of his other horses. Westwick, who never recovered the effects of his race for the Alexandra Plate last year, has not been sold, and will commence his stud career at Dring Houses next season. He is by Stockwell, from Mowerina, the dam of West Australian, and is a rather short horse, high on the leg, but showing great quality. His appearance, however, is not improved by his curious, *outré* Melbourne ears. Next year we shall see the Gladiateur, Cathedral, and Victorious two-year-olds; the Savernake, Cambuscan, Breadalbane, and The Duke yearlings; and the Dalesman, Lecturer, Lord Lyon, and The Earl foals. The young Gladiateurs are said to be very promising. Mr. Cowen has sustained a severe loss by the death of Zeno, an own brother to Ladas, who broke his back while being "cast" for an operation last week.

The Ridgway Club (Lytham) meeting, principally occupied the attention of coursing men last week. Pretender, by Cardinal York—Little Rebel, beat Cyclone, by Cauld Kail—Lady Stormont, in the final course of the North Lancashire Stakes. The winner displayed all the stoutness of the Cardinal Yorks, as in two or three of his courses he appeared hopelessly beaten, but his wonderful staying powers enabled him to wipe off the points against him. Chivalry, an own sister to Cyclone, won the South Lancashire Stakes; and Shendy, by Racing Hopfactor—Shandygaff, ran up. The undefeated Bed of Stone reappeared in the Clifton Cup, which she divided with Duty Repeated, who also belongs to Mr. Briggs. She appears just to lack a high turn of speed, or she would be a most formidable Waterloo Cup candidate. At the Burton-on-Trent meeting, Great Malvern, by Racing Hopfactor—Gipsy Queen, won the BromleyManor Cup; the other stakes were not run through owing to the scarcity of "fur," and the meeting was adjourned till to-day. Patent was in great force at the West Herefordshire meeting, as Refraction and Cricket, the winner and runner up of the Bredwardine St. Leger, were both by him. In the Weston Cup, Encore beat Rhoda, by Little Wonder, from Old Rebe.

Mr. Brundril has sustained a severe loss by the death of Animus, who would have been a strong favourite for the Waterloo Cup. He was by Bonus—Theatre Royal, and it will be remembered that he ran up to Bab-at-the-Bowster, for an 128 dog stake at Southport last year. He also won at Amesbury this season, showing immense fire and brilliancy. Nothing has been yet seen of Lady Lyons or Lobelia; the former is thought to be in reserve for Waterloo, where the Lancashire puppies will be pretty strong, and so will the Idea tribe. We shall say a few words next week on the old controversy as to the introduction of a fixed scale of points in judging dogs, which the Birmingham Show has revived.

NOTES ON THE JOURNALS.

It is to be hoped that no Midland Guardians of the Poor are capable of acting as the Clerkenwell Guardians are alleged to have recently done. "A Ratepayer" writes to the papers to say that the other day twenty of the gentlemen who are the parochial guardians of the watch and clock making parish went to Watford to look at a piece of land, in, we suppose, the interests of the Union. They appear to have combined pleasure with business, for the story goes that each gentleman afterwards charged the Union with the following personal expenses:—Fare to Watford, 3s.; dinner, 10s. 8d.; coffees, 3s. 6d.; cigars, 4s.; total, £18 2s. If this be so, "A Ratepayer" may well ask in what shape will the item be passed by the Poor-law Auditor? We cannot conceive anything so disgraceful of a public body; in this district we are sure such a thing would never occur—the Guardians of the Poor being in many places that might be instanced no more like the Guardians of the comic papers than they resemble Mephistopheles.

What is this free country coming to? We are prompted to ask the question by reading in a contemporary journal what is called "A New Police Regulation." This regulation will, it is to be feared, inspire the licensed victualling interest with deadly hatred to the Government. Will it be believed that the Commissioners of Police have forbidden publicans to allow their patrons to disport themselves at skittles where money or beer is played for? We can imagine the sensation this ukase is causing in circles where beer, tobacco, and "knock-'em-downs" are regarded as lovingly as the Italian opera by some patrician dame, and we can sympathise with the proprietors of all "good, dry skittle-alleys," and the gentlemen who gain a subsistence by "putting-up" the pins, and whose occupation is now gone. All we hope is that the new regulation will not make the Vitlers rise *en masse*, and besiege the Premier's official residence until the right honourable gentlemen interferes in the matter. As for Scotland Yard, we shall not be at all surprised to hear of that head-quarters of the police being stormed and sacked.

Last week we felt called upon to say a word on behalf of the Poor, whom "we have always with us." Elsewhere, in this Number, we make another appeal to the rich to help their less fortunate neighbours at this season of merry-making and thanksgiving. And here we wish to call attention to the children of the indigent—the flotsam and jetsam of our population. It makes all the difference ultimately whether a child is well or ill-fed—if he is properly cared for, or suffered to rove about the streets "picking up" what merely keeps him from starving. In proof of this, we quote a medical opinion that "one-half of the children of the poor come to their death before they are three years old, while only ten per cent. of the children of the rich die before that age." It is not difficult to arrive at the cause of this mortality: *want of food does it.* We pride ourselves upon our charity, our institutions, our patriotism, our religious goodness: yet we allow the poor to starve in the midst of plenty. Poverty runneth about naked in the streets, and no man regardeth it. The wail of these little ones for food is not heard in the city's busy hum and the roar of the multitude; and we wish each other a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with smiling faces, and as if there were no such things in the wide world as Poverty, Hunger, and Death!

As a fitting pendant to the above, it may be instructive to take a glance at a phase of life which we would fain hope is more a characteristic of America than of England. In New York city there has been opened by some Sisters of Charity a Foundling Hospital. It was required. During one month, that of November, there were left at that hospital twenty-nine infants, the majority as naked as when they came into the world. Their mothers had in every case save one left in the receiving-crib a slip of paper on which was written a name and the date of the child's birth, so that there will be no difficulty in identifying them whenever the occasion arises. The fact of such a hospital being necessary is of course much to be regretted; but where are those among us so free from sin that they could cast a stone at the Magdalen, who, in the dead of night, hurries along the cold streets to the Foundling Hospital, and, with many a prayer for it and for herself, leaves her infant in the little crib, behind which one of the patient Sisters waits to receive it?

The people of Weston-super-Mare ought to be a very happy community. They enjoy almost every blessing under the sun. They live on the most picturesque part of the western coast, and enjoy the beauties of the land whilst exempt from the dangers of the ocean—until, that is, a tidal wave comes and washes the town away. They have an estimable lord of the manor, a comfortable club, good magistrates, wise Town Commissioners (some of them), skilled doctors by the dozen, and many other social blessings. Their iterary palates are stimulated weekly by an excellent local newspaper, established ever so many years ago; and, besides the advantages to be derived from the circulating libraries, they enjoy, at rare intervals, the rhythmical effusions of a member of the Local Board, whom the local paper calls the local Laureate. Yes; Weston has a poet, and his name is Wansbrough. We regret to say, however, that Weston does not appreciate him. As for the Town Commissioners, we regret to say they were rude enough at their last meeting to go the length of refusing to hear what the bard had written. He had selected for the subject of his muse the rather unusual one of "Rats": with which we suppose Weston is troubled. "The butchers," said the poetic Commissioner, "have complained of late about the rats eating the carcases at the slaughter-house, and I will read the following lines on the same:—

> "The butchers complain of the slaughter-house rats;
> To meet this sad case get some thorough good cats."

These lines (we quote the *Weston Mercury's* report) were followed by roars of laughter, after which the chairman said that such proceedings would ridicule the Board. Mr. Wansbrough, however, attempted a second reading, but was assailed with cries of "nonsense," "order," "shut up,', &c. Our contemporary's reporter, with a persistence worthy of a better cause, procured the poet's manuscript, and printed the poet's rhymes, as we do "for the benefit of the out-door public." Here they are:

> "The butchers complain of the slaughter-house rats;
> To meet this sad case get some thorough good cats,
> And then we shall save four pounds every year—
> The slaughter-house man will then look very queer.
> They've written and talked about this many times,
> But the Board only laughs, and don't care for my rhymes.
> A complaint was made by our surveyor last week,
> Who stated he'd seen a sad mangled sheep;
> Now the butchers pay rent and are good honest men,
> And should we not try to accommodate them?
> I hope you'll second this clear resolution,
> Then I'll sit down, which will be the conclusion.
> But should you not see the force of my plan,
> Let some one do better, by all means, if they can;
> But if you determine to keep our rat catcher,
> It will not at all meet this difficult matter.
> Perhaps some one will say if their tails were forthcoming,
> We should know they were dead, which would put a stop to their running.
>
> N.B.—I don't know exactly what metre this is, but if set to music, it goes to the tune—"I wish we had no rats." Moved by WILLIAM WANSBROUGH."

Comment would be superfluous.

POLICE AND LAW COURTS.

CATTLE STEALERS.

James Crick, farmer and cattle dealer, and William Livett, a labourer in his service, have been committed for trial by the Newmarket magistrates for stealing ten cows. Crick and the prosecutor (a Mr. Millwright, of Soham, Cambridgeshire) were intimate friends. The cattle were sold by Crick to a carcass butcher, named Motley, of the New Meat Market, London, and six were identified by the prosecutor.

A NOTTINGHAM SCHOOLMASTER CHARGED WITH THEFT.

A painful case was before the Nottingham magistrates on Saturday. A respectably-dressed young man, named George Henry Steedman, was charged with stealing jewellery and other articles from various shops in the town. The prisoner was assistant schoolmaster at the People's College. During the past week or two he had visited several shops in the town, ostensibly to make a purchase, though he had, it was alleged, managed when the shopmen's backs were turned to secrete about his person rings, a timepiece, books, &c. The police were put on the track, and Steedman was apprehended on Friday by a Nottingham detective at Derby, where he had been enlisted into the army. Several missing rings were found upon him. He was remanded.

HOMICIDE AT SMETHWICK.

William Jones, *alias* Lippit, has been committed by the West Bromwich magistrates on a charge of killing Thomas Allmark. On the 4th instant the men quarrelled at a tavern at Smethwick. They called each other liars, and the prisoner seized Allmark by the neck, and shook him. Allmark fell on the floor in the kitchen, and the prisoner stood over him. The deceased took hold of a spittoon, and struck Jones on the forehead with it. The prisoner then laid hold of Allmark by the hair, and struck him several times on the neck with his fist. Deceased was held down in a stooping position whilst the prisoner struck him, so that he could not help himself. When Jones let Allmark go he fell upon the ground, and a wagoner picked him up and put him in the middle of the kitchen, thinking he might recover, but he never stirred afterwards.—The prisoner had nothing to say, and "did not see what good witnesses could do for him."

A CHILD RUFFIAN!

Happily we seldom hear of such an act of juvenile ruffianism as one that was disclosed at the Blackburn Police Court on Saturday, when John Waring, aged ten, was charged with injuring a child under four years of age, named Edward Smith, by placing him on a fire. On the previous Monday, Smith and Waring and two other children were playing in the house of a neighbour, named Rawcliffe, when Smith began to sing the election song, "Hornby for ever." Waring said if he sang it again he would put him on the fire. Smith replied that he would "box" Waring, and again sang the song, whereupon Waring lifted him upon a chair, and then placed him on the hot top bar of the fire-grate, where he held him for some time, and then lifted him on to the fender and pressed his thighs against the bars of the fire-grate. Waring finally seated the poor child upon a hot cinder on the hearth, and held him in that position for several seconds. The child was dreadfully burnt, and is not out of danger. The young ruffian Waring was remanded,

SHOOTING A DOG.

In the Court of Queen's Bench the case of Wythes *versus* Jennings has been heard before the Lord Chief Justice and a common jury. The defendant, a farmer, living at Kingsbury, Warwickshire, shot the dog of plaintiff, a widow lady who resides close to Mr. Jennings. According to the plaintiff, the dog was very quiet and playful, and the defendant shot him without excuse; but defendant said the dog had barked and growled and even flown at him before this particular occasion, and he had warned both the plaintiff and her man that the dog was ferocious. On the 16th of July, the defendant was returning from his cherry orchard, where he had been firing off his gun to frighten the birds, when he was attacked by the dog at the gate of his own foldyard; he retreated some distance towards his house, protecting himself with his gun, when, as he said, the trigger went off haphazard. He admitted, however, that when he first saw the dog at his gate he called out to the plaintiff's man that if he did not keep the dog off he would shoot him.—The jury found a verdict for the defendant.

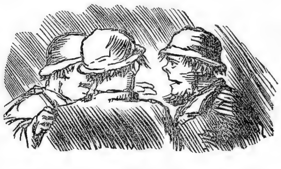
THE "ABYSSINIAN" GOLD.

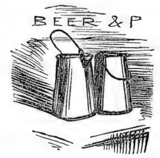
The case of "Pyke and another *v.* Bull," was before the Court of Queen's Bench on Saturday. The plaintiffs are manufacturers of articles made of what they call Abyssinian gold, of which they are the inventors. The defendant is a dealer in jewelry and newspapers, and the plaintiffs sought to recover a sum alleged to be due for Abyssinian gold goods sold and delivered. The defendant paid £3 16s. into court, and said that the plaintiffs had warranted the goods to wear as well as gold, and to keep their colour, and that chains and other articles supplied to him had lost their colour, and worn very differently from gold. He was a newspaper dealer near Portman-square, and he had been induced by the plaintiffs to purchase a good many articles—chains, pendants, &c.; some of these he had sold, but many of them had been returned by his customers tarnished and looking like copper or brass. Some of these had been changed by the plaintiffs, but those which were substituted proved very soon as bad as the first. One of the plaintiffs, who was, in fact, the only witness for his case, early in the course of the trial said that all his chains required was a little soap and water and a leather, and the Chief Justice told him to send for any materials which he required from his place of business in Holborn and try the experiment. Of this permission he did not avail himself, and eventually the jury found a verdict for the defendant.

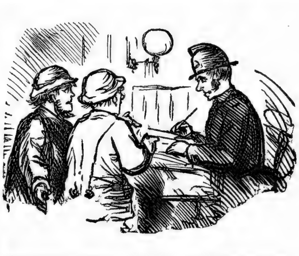
INCIDENTS OF THE WEEK

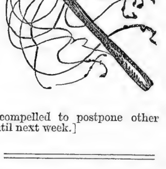
ILLUSTRATED.

A "conspiracy to murder" case, at Erdington, had a fortunate ending. A few days ago a labourer, named Thomas Boyle, suggested to Henry Swan the murder of another labourer, Patrick Fahey. Boyle wanted Henry Swan to meet Fahey at a certain time and place, take him by the throat, knock him down, and jump upon him till he died! At Swan's request, his brother, Wm. Swan, was sent for. When he arrived, Boyle explained the plan of the intended murder over again to both brothers; and so desirous was he that Fahey should be "put out of the way," that he offered them, as an inducement to join in the murder, the munificent reward of two half-gallons of ale. The two Swans consented, with no intentention, however, as afterwards transpired, of committing the murder or allowing it to take place. The three worthies then arranged the plan of the crime. The next night was fixed for the dark deed. Fahey was to be decoyed to Stockland Green by the bloodthirsty Boyle, who was to keep him in conversation until the Swans came up and finished him off; Boyle, who had great regard for his own person, having engaged to escape in the *melée*. To the two Swans' conduct Fahey probably owes his life. Those two honest men went at once to the police, and informed them of the whole affair. Police-constable Matthews, by direction of his superior officer, accompanied the Swans to the place where the murder was to have been committed, concealed himself until he heard Boyle and Fahey conversing, and, when Boyle ran away, pursued and captured him, and took him to the Erdington police station. Fahey said that there was a bad feeling between himself and the prisoner, arising out of some legal proceedings that had taken place. What was to have been a tragedy, but had ended like a farce, was almost turned into burlesque by the magisterial decision, which was to bind the prisoner over to keep the peace and pay 16s. 6d. costs, instead, as one would have thought, of giving him a long term of imprisonment, accompanied by a liberal supply of this—









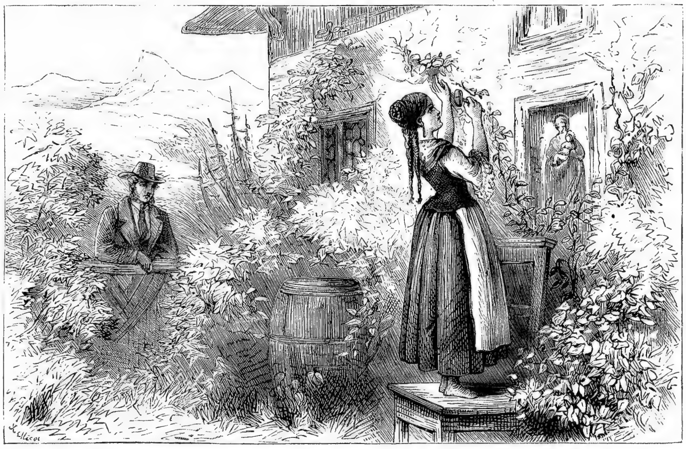
[We are compelled to postpone other Illustrated Incidents until next week.]

Egypt's Question of the Future.—A St. Petersburg telegram says:—"The most influential Russian journals express the opinion that the Turco-Egyptian question is for Egypt the vital question of the future. They consider that, though the difficulty may be temporarily settled, it must unavoidably be revived later on, and form a branch of the Eastern question. Russia and France must and will be on the side of Egypt, this being one of the many motives of the *rapprochement* between those two Powers; while England and Austria doubtless will take the part of Turkey. Prussia, it is added, is not directly interested in the question."

A ROSE AND A PEARL.*

This is a love story of the "good" sort. But by "good" we do not at all mean "dull." On the contrary, the story is excellent reading throughout. The scene of the opening chapter is laid in the little village of Wittersea—"on the northern side of that chain of mountains and Alpine passes which divides Northern and German from Italian or Southern Tyrol." The hero, properly so called, of the book, is Charlie Howard, a young gentleman on whose impressionable heart a little German girl, Röschen, makes what at first we thought would prove to be an ineffaceable mark. But with Mr. Charlie Howard sweethearting is almost a business; he cannot withstand the pretty face of Röschen, although he has an equally pretty and much more ladylike cousin at home in England. Röschen is betrothed to a musician named Giovanni—a great-souled, large-hearted hero, whom Röschen slights for the English gentleman, and together they roam through the meadows and up the mountains. One night an attempt is made to assassinate Mr. Howard, who, however, recovers, but never sees Röschen again. She, poor child! dies, partly broken-hearted, and Charlie finally marries instead of the German "Rose," an English "Pearl." The authoress has drawn two death-bed scenes in this little volume, which are touchingly real and homely. But, indeed, the whole story is well told, and the book is one which we should like to see widely read, because it deserves to be.

We reproduce the frontispiece to this interesting volume. It depicts an interview between Charles Howard and Röschen at the mountain village which was the latter's home: "As he drew near, a sound of soft, full singing, met his ear. A very round mellow voice it was, and Charlie, though no musician, could appreciate and perceive this. It was with some astonishment, for he had never heard her sing before, that he discovered that Röschen was the songstress. She was standing on a chair, which she had placed against the wall by the rose tree, and at the full stretch of her little arms, was nailing back, with the help of some little bits of dark cloth, some straggling branches which had wandered over the figure of the Virgin and Child, painted roughly enough but not unartistically, on the white wall above her. She held her head now on one side, to see her work, now on the other; but, as she trained the branches, cut off little sprays here and there, or nailed away sturdily with the hammer, she still went on singing softly to herself."



"Röschen was standing on a chair which she had placed against the wall by the rose-tree."

STORIES FOR MY CHILDREN.†

Christmas is the children's festival *par excellence*. "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not." The gentle rebuke comes back to all our memories at Christmas like a good instinct. At no other time of the year do the children seem to have so large a claim upon us. Their bright eyes and happy faces mingle with the holly and mistletoe and give life to the Christmas greenery; their merry laughter rings out amongst the Christmas greetings. They are the life and soul of the Christian festival, and we heartily welcome every contribution to their enjoyment. The publishers this year have been lavish in administering to the entertainment of the little ones. Through the well-known house of Macmillan another distinguished pen is enlisted amongst the famous army of writers for children. Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen has found agreeable employment in the intervals of parliamentary work to transcribe for the press a collection of stories which he told originally to his children in the pleasant half-hours before the arrival of their bed-time, and the sound of the dressing bell interrupted the parental talk. It is a frank and manly confession on the part of a member of parliament that, once a day, he has had a romp with his children, has sat and invented tales for them, and enjoyed the occupation. The late Lord Derby was passionately fond of children, and has often been caught at a romp with his little friends when fiery politicians have credited him with the plotting of direful deeds. Victor Hugo is the companion now and then of all the children in Guernsey. What an enviable position is Hans Christian Andersen's, to be the recognised story-teller of all the reading children of Europe! Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen may feel a little of Andersen's sensation ere long; for without doubt "Stories for My Children" will be a popular book in the nursery, and in the hands of mothers and governesses in holiday hours, not to say a companion for girls and boys who get it given to them out and out as a present for their own individual use. There is the true nursery ring about the author's stories. They are simple, telling romances; they don't attempt to account for anything; they don't go out of their way to point severe morals; they are down-right improbabilities, told with all the semblance of truth; extraordinary stories told for fun, stories of fairies and witches and enchanted lands. "Puss-Cat Mew," for example, is a charming little narrative:

> "Puss-cat Mew jumped over a coal;
> In her best petticoat burnt a great hole;
> Puss-cat Mew shan't have any milk
> 'Till her best petticoat 's mended with silk."

Very few people know who Puss-cat Mew was. The book under notice tells them all about her, and her story is a very remarkable one, but not more so than the history of Eva's ramble, in which she met "The Brown Fairy," a charming little lady, who rode on a white rabbit. The wonderful meeting is depicted in our illustration, selected from a number of others which adorn this very pleasant and admirably-written book. There is another picture, too, which we reproduce, that of "Ned and the Witch." Both persons in this engraving are behaving very rudely to each other. Ned's conduct can only be excused by the extraordinary circumstances of the case, which were these:

"So Ned strolled on to the edge of the wood, and when he got outside it, lo and behold, there was the very same Old Woman whom Kate had seen, sitting in just the same position, and looking every bit the same as she had done an hour before.

"'Halloo, old lady!' said Ned, 'how came you here?—and have you seen Kate?'

"Up sprang the Old Woman in a moment, and looked angrily at Ned.

"'*You're* one of those jackdawing fellows, are you?' said she. 'I know your doings, and I'll serve you as I served the girl!" And she drew herself up, and was just going to say her terrible words again.

"But Ned was a schoolboy, and schoolboys know a great deal about Witches and Fairies, and he saw in a moment that there was something queer about this old dame! So. before she could say another word, he spoke boldly out, looking her straight in the face—

> "As in præsenti perfectum format in avi,
> I don't see the use of a mutton-chop without
> any gravy."

"These words at once confused the Old Woman, for witches of her class can't stand Latin, and don't understand rhyming: so she looked very furious and trembled with rage, but never said her mysterious words.

"However, she rallied in a moment, and screamed out, "Don't think to cheat me, you rascal! I'll soon show what's what!" and raised her hand to her face to make the same sign which had had such an effect upon Kate.

"As soon as she did this, however, Ned instantly made the same sign, and with both his hands, placing the thumb of the left on the little finger of the right, the thumb of the latter on his nose, spreading out all his fingers, and exclaiming at the same time in a bold and fearless tone—

> "No witch can face a scholar or a rhymer:
> Confound the man who wrote the Latin Primer!"

And no sooner were the last words out of his mouth than a tremendous cheer broke out from the hundreds of rabbits in the great warren close by, for, although it is not generally known, rabbits, like boys, have to learn Latin, and neither the one nor the other set of scholars have had a moment's peace since the wise masters of schools have discarded the respectable good old Eton Latin Grammar and put a Latin Primer in its place, which makes learning twice as difficult, jumbles cases and genders and tenses together in a fearful manner, and puzzles everybody who tries to master it so much, that I think it must have been the work of a witch.

"However this may be, the words were no sooner out of Ned's mouth than the Old Woman flew into a more frightful rage than ever, and, seizing up the nearest stick she could find, prepared to rush upon Ned, who, on his side, drew himself boldly up, clenched his fists, and prepared to play his part like a man.

"But at that very moment there stepped out of the fern a good-looking young Lady, dressed in white, with an oak-leaf crown upon her head, and a fern-plant in her hand.

"What does all this mean?" she asked: "I don't understand all this row in my country! I was nearly asleep when my rabbits woke me with their cheering; what's the matter?"

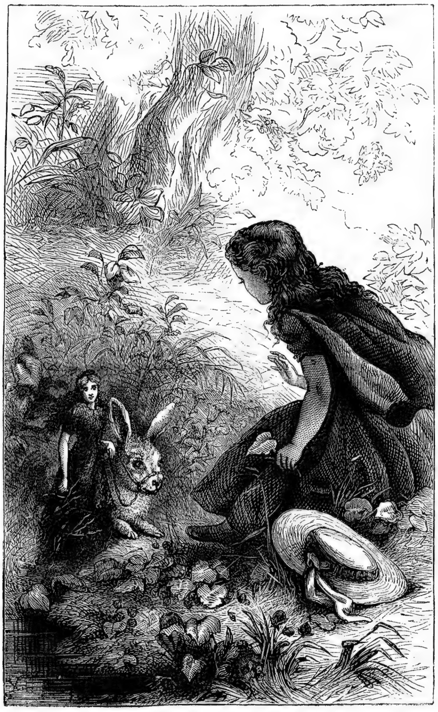
"Ned took off his hat when he saw the Lady, and immediately replied, "Madam, I was looking for my sister, when this elderly person began to slang me."

"And what if I did?" answered the other; "ain't I Queen of the Jackdaws, and mayn't I do as I like in my own place?"

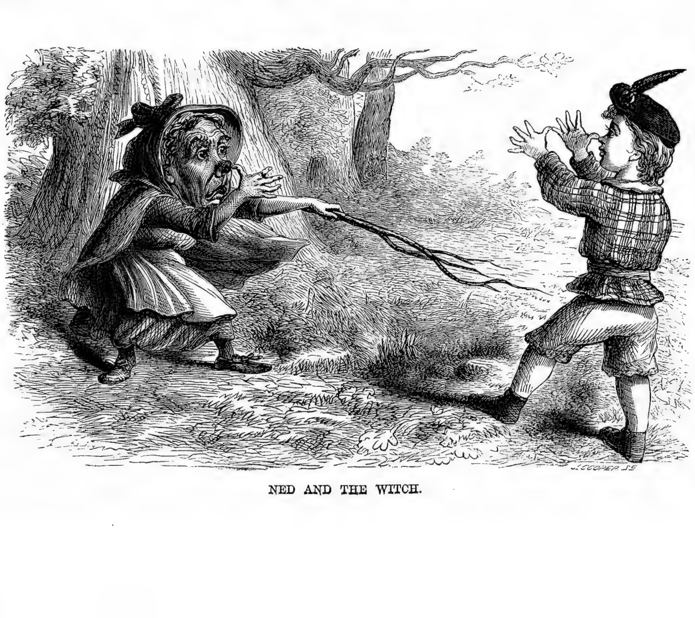
"'*Your* own place! I like that!' said the Lady. "Why, you evil-minded old female, you know perfectly well that I am the Fern Fairy, and this country belongs to me. I've had enough of you and your jackdaws, and I won't have you disturbing the whole place like this. Get away with you!"

"Now the Old Woman was no match for the Fern Fairy; so she dared not say much, and slunk away grumbling: but as she went she cast a glance full of malice at Ned, and said aloud: 'At all events, the youngster won't find his sister in a hurry, that's one good job!' and off she went."

Ned did find his sister, nevertheless; the good fairy triumphs as good fairies always do over wicked old women, and as good boys always triumph in the end over sneaks. Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen's children will have a host of sympathetic friends this Christmas, wishing they could hear the Member of Parliament telling his stories himself.



EVA AND THE FAIRY.



NED AND THE WITCH.

The ship *Crescent City*, with nearly 5,000 bales of cotton on board, has been lost. Her crew were picked up at Falmouth.

In consequence of information which has reached the Government, precautionary measures against possible attempts at insurrection in certain districts of Ireland have been taken. Troops are ready to march on any part of the country at an hour's warning.

An Example to be Followed.—The first instance of a non-commissioned officer of the British army having matriculated at one of the universities has just occurred, Sergeant J. Snaden, of the Royal Engineers, having proceeded from the School of Military Engineering, Chatham, to Trinity College, Dublin, where he has graduated, a special order from the War Department authorising him to retain his present rank in the corps. Sergeant Snaden, at the recent competitive examination at Chatham, succeeded in obtaining the Royal Albert scholarship, which entitles him to £50 per annum for three years, and tuition at Trinity College, Dublin, in addition to which he was also awarded the gold medal. An order from the Horse Guards directs that Sergeant Snaden during the time he is prosecuting his studies at Trinity College is to continue to receive the regimental and departmental pay of his rank. Sergeant Snaden is entirely self-taught.

---

* "A Rose and a Pearl." By C. C. Fraser-Tytler. London: Hatchards, 187, Piccadilly. 1870.

† "Stories for My Children." By E. H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, M.P. London: Macmillan and Co.

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NEW YEAR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

A NEW and Original Humorous Story, by the Author of "Verdant Green," will be commenced on January 1, in the ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS.

DURING the New Year, a special feature will be introduced in the pages of the ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS of immense importance to all persons engaged in manufactures of all kinds, and to Students in Schools of Art.

J. L. HATTON, the famous Composer, Author of "Good bye, Sweetheart, good bye," and some of the most exquisite part songs of the age, will contribute several new and original works to the ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS during the New Year.

INCIDENTS of the WEEK will be Illustrated by an Eminent Artist, specially engaged.

HUNTING in the MIDLANDS will be Illustrated by Miss Bowers.

SUBSCRIBERS should begin with the New Year. Back Numbers kept in Stock from the commencement.

DURING the New Year, Original Pictures of Midland Counties' Halls, Castles, and Famous Scenes, will be published in the ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS.

SKETCHES in the MIDLANDS, by Daylight and Gaslight are commenced this week in the ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS, and will be continued during the New Year.

SKETCHES and Pictures of "Trades and Manufactures" will be resumed at intervals during the New Year.

PICTURES of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Oxfordshire, will appear from time to time during the New Year.

TITLE-PAGE and Index for Vol. 1 on Jan. 1. Reading Cases, 2s. 6d. Covers for Binding, 2s. 6d.

THE ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS

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PUBLIC NOTICE.

IN consequence of numerous mistakes having occurred, S. W. SUFFIELD thinks it his duty to inform the public generally, that the NEW DINING ROOMS and LUNCHEON BAR he has recently opened at Nos. 17 and 18, UPPER TEMPLE STREET, are in no way connected with any other Establishment in the town (either trading under the same name or otherwise), but that he is the Sole Proprietor of these Rooms, and the only Person of the name in the trade.

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THIS EVENING (Saturday), Dec. 18, 1869, BENEFIT of Mr. J. C. SMITH, Stage Manager,
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Reserved Side Gallery and Front of Great Gallery, 5s. Reserved Floor, 3s. 6d. Unreserved Great Gallery, 2s. Unreserved Floor, 1s.

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BUY YOUR TEA at the Wholesale Warehouse, 131 and 132, MOOR STREET (Corner of Carr's Lane), and save 20 per cent.—John Collett and Company. [304

BUENOS AYRES GOVERNMENT CERTIFICATE.—Translation.—We, the undersigned, at the request of Messrs. Jas. C. Thompson and Co., certify that the Iron Safes of Messrs. Chubb and Son, London, of which these gentlemen are agents, were exposed for several hours to the fire that took place in the offices of the National Government on the evening of the 26th instant; that in our presence they were easily opened with their respective keys: that the moneys and important documents they contained were found in perfect order; and that these safes are now in use in the National Treasury Office.—Buenos Ayres, 31st July, 1867.

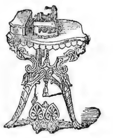
(Signeo) J. M. DRAGO, Treasurer of the National Government.
JOSE TOMAS ROJO.
JUAN M. ALVAREZ.

A true copy.—A. M. Bell.

A large assortment of these SAFES may be inspected, and lists of prices obtained, at CHUBB and SON'S, 57, St. Paul's Churchyard, London; 68, Cross-street, Manchester; 28, Lord-street, Liverpool; and Horseley Fields, Wolverhampton. [182

USEFUL PRESENTS.

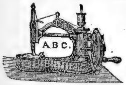
SEWING MACHINES,
UNEQUALLED.
Lock Stitch, from 70s.



THE ALBERTA,
6½ Guineas.
Single Thread, from 35s.

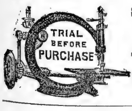
WHIGHT & MANN,
143, Holborn Hill, E.C.
[349

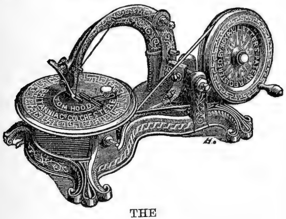
LAST AMERICAN WONDER.—The best HAND and TREADLE LOCK-STITCH SEWING MACHINE the world has yet produced is the A B C; price four guineas, American made, on Singer's principle; will make a shirt or an overcoat, and for practical utility, simplicity, and durability is unsurpassed by any £10 machine in the kingdom, and not approached by any known machine sold at the same price. Prospectuses and photographs of machine free.



G. W. JENNINGS,
52, *CHEAPSIDE, LONDON.*
[309

WILLCOX AND GIBBS
SILENT
SEWING MACHINE.
MACHINES TAKEN IN EXCHANGE.
Machines on Hire.
T. S. TONGUE,
Sole Agent,
29, *UNION PASSAGE,*
BIRMINGHAM. [221





THE
"TOM HOOD."

A NEW LOCK-STITCH
DOMESTIC SEWING MACHINE,
Acknowledged to be the
BEST HAND MACHINE YET MANUFACTURED,
PRICE £4. 4s., COMPLETE.

Agents for Birmingham:—
E. AND F. BOSTOCK,
FAMILY SHOE WAREHOUSE,
24, *NEW STREET,*
(UNION PASSAGE CORNER.)
[301

FEATHER AND FLOCK WAREHOUSE.

ESTABLISHED 1824.
JOHN BUFFERY,
6, *HIGH STREET,*
(Opposite Nelson Statue), BIRMINGHAM.

IRON BEDSTEADS, BEDS, MATTRESSES,
BED TICKS (Ready Made),
BLANKETS, COUNTERPANES, &c.
A List of Prices free on Application. [331

By Special Appointment.

PHOTOGRAPHER IN ORDINARY
TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

ROBERT W. THRUPP,
66, NEW STREET, BIRMINGHAM,
Near the Society of Artists.'
[315

FOR TOYS, CHRISTMAS GAMES, LADIES' WORK BOXES, COMPANIONS, DESKS, AND A CHOICE SELECTION OF FANCY ARTICLES, SUITABLE FOR PRESENTS, GO TO
WALLINGTON'S
NOAH'S ARK TOY DEPOT,
58, *BULL STREET, BIRMINGHAM,*
(Close to the Great Western Railway Station). [341

TOOLS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION, SUITABLE FOR STONEMASONS, CARPENTERS, COACH BUILDERS, BOAT BUILDERS, PLUMBERS, COOPERS, MINERS, GASFITTERS, &c.

ALL KINDS OF
CUTLERY, GUNS, PISTOLS, &c.,
Cheapest and Best in the Midland Counties,
FROM
ROUTLEDGE'S
(LATE THOMAS),
TOOL MANUFACTORY & WAREHOUSE,
23, *BULL STREET, BIRMINGHAM.*

ESTABLISHED 1850.

Price Lists on Application. [338

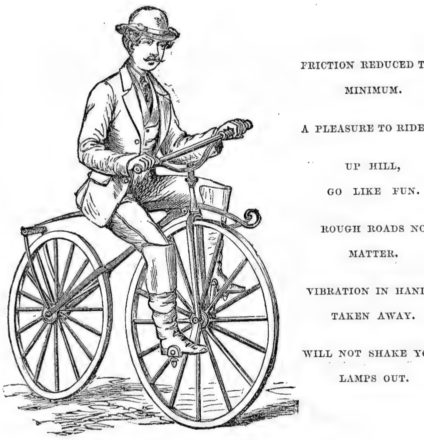
ESTABLISHED NEARLY A CENTURY.

MASON'S CELEBRATED RUSKS, for INFANTS and INVALIDS, prepared under his own personal superintendence from the finest Wheaten Flour, are strongly recommended by the Medical Profession as the best Farinaceous Food yet produced, and being light, nutritious, and easily digested, are admirably suited for Infants and Invalids.
Delivered to any part of the Town and Suburbs.

RICHARD MASON,
22, CHURCH STREET, BIRMINGHAM. [334]

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

THE MOST USEFUL
PRESENT
YOU CAN MAKE TO
YOUNG MEN
IS THE NEW
ANTI-FRICTION
ROLLER BICYCLE.



FRICTION REDUCED TO A MINIMUM.
A PLEASURE TO RIDE IT.
UP HILL,
GO LIKE FUN.
ROUGH ROADS NO MATTER.
VIBRATION IN HANDLE TAKEN AWAY.
WILL NOT SHAKE YOUR LAMPS OUT.

CHEAPEST BICYCLE YOU CAN PURCHASE.

BEST BEST IRON USED. WHEELS ALL HICKORY WOOD.
BEARINGS ALL OVER CASE HARDENED.
CRANKS QUITE SAFE, WON'T GET LOOSE. AXLES WON'T BREAK. A MORE PLEASANT ARTICLE CANNOT BE PRODUCED BY THE TRADE.

No. 1, Front or Guide Wheel, 34in. and 36in. £8 8 0
No. 2, „ „ „ 38in. and 40in. 9 9 0

THE ANTI-FRICTION ROLLER BICYCLE IS A DOUBLE PATENT.

SINGLE PATENT BICYCLE,
TO TAKE AWAY VIBRATION FROM HANDS AND BODY, ALL CASE-HARDENED BEARINGS.

No. 1, Front or Guide Wheel, 34in. and 36in. £6 6 0
No. 2, „ „ „ 38in. and 40in. 7 7 0

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FORDER AND TRAVERS,
CARRIAGE WORKS AND VELOCIPEDE MANUFACTURERS, BILSTON STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON.

F. and T. wish to call the particular attention of Velocipede Riders, having had great experience in the use of Velocipedes on the Roads. They have made great improvements, which insure greater speed with less labour, and respectfully invite them to inspect their new Patents before purchasing from any other maker.

JOHN BEGG,
DISTILLER TO HER MAJESTY
AND HIS
ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.
Wholesale Liquor Merchants and Licensed Victuallers may obtain samples and prices of the renowned
LOCHNAGAR WHISKEY
Upon application to the Sole Agent,
JOHN A. JONES,
4, ANN STREET, BIRMINGHAM. [290

THE EUROPEAN WINE COMPANY,
48, *HIGH STREET,*
BIRMINGHAM.

J. ASH & CO.,
333] Sole Agents.

TO BUILDERS, CONTRACTORS, AND OTHERS.

FROM PHŒNIX SAWING, PLANING, AND MOULDING MILLS,
SNOW HILL, BIRMINGHAM.

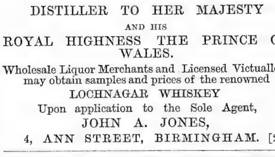
You can purchase Architraves, Door, Base, Cornice, and Bolection Mouldings, in great variety; Sash and Angle Beads, Angle Hollows, Parting Laths, Cappings, Greenhouse Bars, Rafters, and Sash Bars, to any size; Dadoes, Skirtings, Match Boarding, and Flooring, &c.

W. GREEN AND SON,
TIMBER DEALERS.

You can obtain Line Posts, Dahlia and Flower Sticks Forcing Frames, Trellis Laths, Cut Nails and Brads, &c.
N.B.—For Cash ⅞ by 7 best White Flooring prepared, at 12s. per square.
All orders executed upon the shortest notice. [124

10,000 CUT TUMBLERS, 3s.6d. per doz.
WILLIAM MOULTON,
18, SNOW HILL.
First-Class GLASS and CHINA at Second-Class Prices. [336

PROTECTION FROM FIRE.



THE PUBLIC ARE CAUTIONED AGAINST
DANGEROUS IMITATIONS.
[141

PHŒNIX FIRE OFFICE,
LOMBARD STREET and CHARING CROSS,
Established 1782.
Insurances effected in all parts of the world.
Prompt and liberal Loss Settlements.
The whole Fire Insurance Duty is now remitted.
[314 GEO. W. LOVELL, Sec.

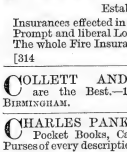
COLLETT AND COMPANY'S TEAS are the Best.—131 and 132, MOOR STREET, BIRMINGHAM. [20

CHARLES PANKHURST, manufacturer of Pocket Books, Card Cases, Needle Cases, &c. Purses of every description.—27, Oxford Street, Digbeth, Birmingham. [212

WORCESTER.

THE Best and Cheapest FANCY DRESS, MANTLE, and MILLINERY WAREHOUSE, is *HERBERT HEMUS'S*, 56, *HIGH STREET,*
(OPPOSITE THE OLD BANK.)
N.B.—All Linens Hemmed free of charge. [328

LITHOGRAPHY, ENGRAVING, AND GENERAL PRINTING,
Promptly executed by
COOPER AND ROSE,
6, 7, 8, and 9, COACH YARD, BULL STREET,
BIRMINGHAM. [322



"WE have seen no fewer than 597 commendatory Newspaper notices of Macniven and Cameron's celebrated steel Pens, the Waverley, Owl, and Pickwick, and we heartily add our own to the number."—*Edinburgh E. Courant.*

For the names of 550 of those journals see *Temple Bar Magazine* for 1870.

Standard.—"THE WAVERLEY will prove a Treasure in the hands of rapid writers."

Examiner.—"THE OWL.—We can vouch personally for the excellence of this invention."

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MACNIVEN & CAMERON,
23 *to* 33, *BLAIR STREET, EDINBURGH,*
(Established 1770).

Agents—MILLINGTON & HUTTON, LONDON.
[350

SELLING OFF
70,000 PIECES OF PAPER HANGINGS.

LEE, MANN, and CO., 30, Colmore Row, Birmingham, respectfully announce that in consequence of their Premises coming down, and having to remove to Ann-street, they are now SELLING OFF the whole of their STOCK of PAPER HANGINGS at very reduced prices, viz.:—

About 20,000 Pieces, from 2½d. to 6d. per Piece.
„ 20,000 „ 7d. to 1s.
„ 20,000 „ 1s. 3d. to 1s. 9d. „
„ 10,000 „ 2s. per piece and upwards.

Including Flock and Gold, Best Block Satin, and French Papers in great variety. [330

HANDSOME PRESENTS SUITABLE FOR ALL OCCASIONS.

MONOGRAMS (Incomparable).—Unique Designs. Five quires of Thick Note and 100 Thick Envelopes (high flap), stamped in four rich colours in any two or three initials for 5s. Specimens, one stamp. No charge for die.—J. Macmichael, Heraldic Stationer to Her Majesty the Queen, 207, King's Road, London, S.W. [217

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.—WINTER DRESSES.
At BAKER and CRISP'S
Patterns post free.
WINTER DRESSES.—The very best Silk Repps, 29s. 6d. the full dress.
WINTER DRESSES.—The New Tartans, in all materials, 6s. 9d. to 21s. full dress.
WINTER DRESSES.—The New Serges, seventy colours, 10s. 6d. to 21s.
WINTER DRESSES.—The New Satin Camlets, 8s. 9d. to 14s. 6d.
WINTER DRESSES.—The New French Merinos, 12s. 6d. to 21s.
WINTER DRESSES.—1,000 Odd Dresses for Christmas Presents, half price.
198, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

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Free for Post-office order.
BAKER and CRISP, 198, Regent Street.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.—VELVETEENS! VELVETEENS! VELVETEENS! The New Moleskin Silk Finish Velveteens, in Black and Colours, from 17s. full dress.
Patterns free.
BAKER and CRISP, 198, Regent Street.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.—1,000 EVENING DRESSES.
All half price.
5s. 6d. and upwards.
Patterns free.—BAKER and CRISP,
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CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.—Charities, Schools, &c.—A Bankrupt's STOCK of excellent ABERDEEN WINCEYS, at 3½d., 4½d., and 6½d. yard, worth 9d., 10½d., and 1s. 60,000 yards various, all good material, in lots of 50 yards, for 12s. 6d., 21s., 25s., 35s., and 50s. each, sent for P.O. order to BAKER and CRISP, 198, Regent Street, London.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.—SILKS, SILKS, SILKS.
Cheap Silks at BAKER and CRISP'S.
Patterns sent post free.
Silks.—Best Fancy Silks for Wedding, Evening, or General Wear, 25s. 6d. to 3 gs. Full Dress.
Silks.—Best Plain Silks for Wedding, Evening, or General Wear, 35s. 6d. to 3 gs. Full Dress.
Silks.—Best Japanese Silks for Wedding, Evening, or General Wear, 21s. 6d. to 2 gs. Full Dress.
Silks.—Best Black Silks for Mourning, Evening, or General Wear, 29s. 6d. to 5 gs. Full Dress.
Silks.—Best White Silks for Wedding, Evening, or Dinner Wear, 39s. 6d. to 3 gs. Full Dress.
The Best Royal Court Satins in every Shade, 39s. 6d. to 3 gs. Full Dress.
198, REGENT STREET, LONDON. [326

38s. DESSERT SERVICES,
Beautifully Painted and Gilt.
WILLIAM MOULTON'S
CHEAP GLASS AND CHINA ESTABLISHMENT,
18, *SNOW HILL.* [337

MILD BREAKFAST BACON,
STILTON CHEESE.
CHEDDAR CHEESE.

THOMAS TAYLOR,
12, *HIGH STREET (Opposite the Market Hall.)*
[339

CUTLERY.

OF THE BEST SHEFFIELD MANUFACTURE.
Every Blade Warranted.

EVANS and MATTHEWS beg to call the attention of Purchasers to the following Prices, which, for cheapness and quality, cannot be surpassed:

KNIVES.

In.		Table. s.	Table. d.	Dessert. s.	Dessert. d.	Carvers. Pair. s.	Carvers. Pair. d.
3½	... Ivory, balanced handles...	12	0 ...	9	0 ...	4	0
3¾	... Ditto „ ...	14	0 ...	11	6 ...	4	0
3¾	... Fine Ivory „ ...	18	0 ...	14	0 ...	6	0
4	... Ditto „ ...	20	0 ...	16	6 ...	6	0
4	... Ditto „ edge pin'd ...	21	0 ...	17	6 ...	6	0
4	... African „ „ ...	24	0 ...	19	0 ...	7	6
4	... Ditto „ „ ...	25	0 ...	20	0 ...	7	6
4	... Ditto „ round end. ditto	26	0 ...	21	0 ...	8	6
4	... Finest African Ivory ...	31	0 ...	25	0 ...	10	0
4	... Ditto „ oval handles	33	0 ...	28	0 ...	12	0
4	... White bone handles ...	11	0 ...	10	0 ...	4	3
4	... Ditto „ „ best	13	0 ...	11	0 ...	4	3

PER DOZEN.

A large STOCK of ELECTRO-PLATED WARES, including TEA and COFFEE SETS, DESSERT KNIVES and FORKS, FISH CARVERS, CRUET FRAMES, LIQUORS of all kinds, CLARET JUGS, BISCUIT BOXES, SPOONS, FORKS, &c., &c., always on view.

EVANS AND MATTHEWS,
(LATE E. SHAW,)
FURNISHING IRONMONGERS AND CUTLERS,
80, *BULL STREET, BIRMINGHAM.*
[Established 1784.] [354

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.
BOYS HOME FROM SCHOOL.
SPECIAL PREMISES FOR JUVENILE CLOTHING,
No. 29, BULL STREET.
LARGE SHOW ROOMS.
CURTIS & CURTIS, TAILORS, BULL STREET,
AND EXCHANGE BUILDINGS, NEW STREET.
See page 279 *of the Supplement.* [355

PIESSE & LUBIN,
Agents in every British Possession,
LABORATORY OF FLOWERS,
MITCHAM AND LONDON.

PIESSE & LUBIN
ATELIER DES FLEURS
WHITE ROSE, a most delicate odour.
FRANGIPANNI, an eternal perfume.
MAGNOLIA, natural as the flower.
OPOPONAX
The Flower King
AMBERGRIS, more rare than gold.
VIOLET and ORANGE, for Weddings.
KISS-ME-QUICK, always sweet.
Three Bottles in case, 7s.;
Single Samples, 2s. 6d.
2, New Bond Street, London
[167

BROWN & POLSON'S CORN FLOUR

IS GENUINE.

PREPARED SOLELY FROM MAIZE—INDIAN CORN.

CAUTION.---TO OBTAIN EXTRA PROFIT BY THE SALE, CHEAP INFERIOR QUALITIES, BEARING A FALSE NAME, ARE SOMETIMES UNSCRUPULOUSLY SUBSTITUTED, INSTEAD OF

BROWN AND POLSON'S.

PEARLINA.

A NEW PREPARATION FROM THE FINEST GRAIN.

BY

BROWN AND POLSON.

It is undoubtedly true that the strength of a nation is the component strength of its individuals; and assuredly the health and strength of individuals are dependent more upon the quantity and quality of the food consumed by them than upon any other single condition. This remark, though true of all ages and circumstances of life, applies with especial force to the diet of early life. The boy, it is said, is the father of the man, and in one very important sense this is true, for if the boy be weakly, so will the man, and both are sure to be so if the food supplied to the former, and out of which the latter grows, be not of such quality as to develop not only animal heat and tissue, but tissue which is also strong and vigorous.

In very early life the greatest attention is necessary to ensure the proper maintenance of animal heat, for heat is almost life to an infant, and herein lies one of the great merits of our Corn Flour. But, as age advances, development follows, tissue is formed, and *strength* is required; then it is that something more is necessary as an article of diet, not in the place of heat-creating food, but as an addition to it, and that, too, of a kind to ensure, as far as may be, the proper development of all the tissues of the body in their due proportion and in vigorous health. Moreover, it is essentially necessary that the food supplied for this purpose be light, easy of digestion, and readily convertible; if it fails in either of these respects, nothing can make up for it, for digestion would be disturbed, and that would put the whole machine out of gear.

Now, we have the satisfaction of knowing upon scientific evidence, from the absolute laws of chemistry, and the unvarying testimony of the physiology of digestion, that in the new article of diet which we have manufactured, and to which we have given the name of *Pearlina*, we have produced a food which is capable of supplying all the elements of the tissues in the highest perfection. It is also in a form which can be digested with the greatest ease at a time when the body really requires such a food for its proper development, and yet is not able to bear the stronger animal foods.

Pearlina is rich in the nitrogenous or albuminous properties, and out of these, bone, muscle, and nerve are formed. It is not rich in merely starchy matter, and is not, therefore, intended to supplant other foods; but, when combined with milk, or taken alternately with Corn Flour, it supplies all that is essential to build up the fabric of the human body in a state of health and strength; and by thus varying the food a much better result is obtainable than by a more restricted diet, for a variety of feeding is really of greater moment than is commonly supposed, and ought not to be regarded merely as a question of taste. Tastes, as they are called, are often instincts which are pregnant with wisdom and truth.

In addition to its value in the dietary of children, *Pearlina* may be made most agreeable for the dinner table, either in the form of a light, easily-digested, but highly-nutritive pudding; or, mixed with a certain proportion of flour, it will be found greatly to improve the quality of pastry, making it not only easier of digestion, and therefore more readily assimilable, but at the same time more agreeable to the palate, and with absolutely greater nutritive power. The value, therefore, of this new article of diet is not limited to children, nor merely to invalids, but will be felt to be a boon to the community at large.

PEARLINA

IS SUPPLIED BY GROCERS, CORNDEALERS, &c.

RECIPES UPON EACH PACKAGE. 6D.

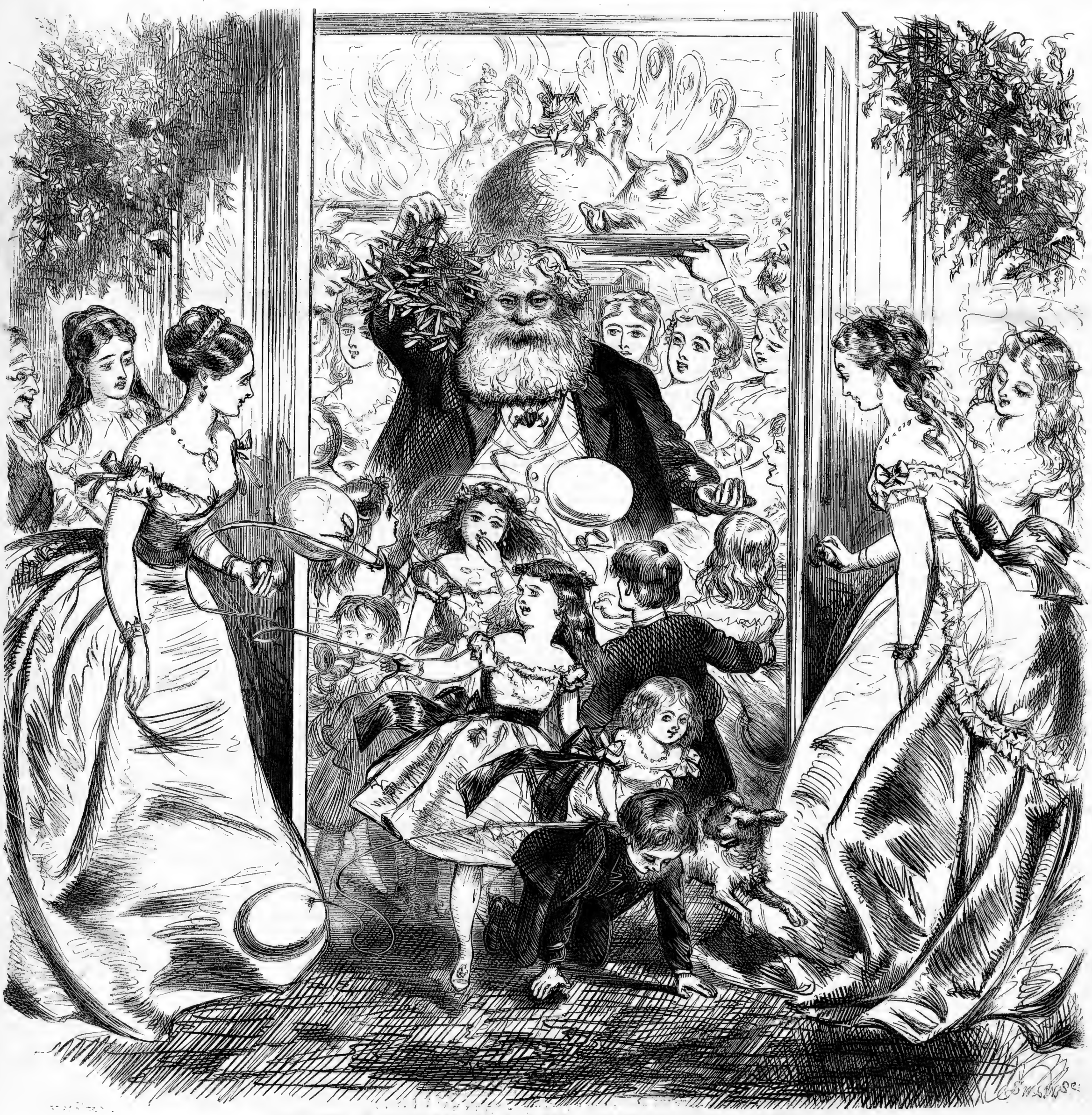
[288

Printed by the Proprietors, HATTON and Co., at their Printing Works, Market Hall Passage, and published at 108, New Street, Birmingham.—*December* 18, 1869.

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER
OF THE

ILLUSTRATED MIDLAND NEWS.

Supplement. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1869. Threepence.



BRINGING IN CHRISTMAS.—*BY F. ELTZE.* *(See "Modern Christmas," page 269.)*

OUR CHRISTMAS GREETING.

Now snow is whitely falling,
And day is day-in-night,
And winds are hoarsely calling—
Lone outcasts spent with flight;
And sylvan spirits pining
Hunger for man's inclining,
Until their haunts reviving with buds of Spring are bright.

But ere the year has ending,
Its pageant wholly done,
There comes a time transcending
All times its course has run;
The failing moments lighten,
As when through skies that brighten
With purple glow and glory descends the setting sun.

The time of festal wreathings
Comes with the dying year,
The time of heart-warm breathings,
Of free and ample cheer;
Of bright and joyous meetings,
Of fond and hearty greetings,
And ardent hopes and wishes for all beloved and dear.

To each and all a measure
Of Christmas joy and peace!
Bright memories to treasure,
Fond hopes for Time's increase!
May shadows life o'ercasting
Be neither dark nor lasting,
And in the Season's lightness may pain and sorrow cease!

To those who, ranged in splendour,
Life's empyrean grace,
Meet courtesy we tender;
Nor turn a vacant face
Upon the poor and lowly,
Not unregarded wholly
In wide and genial wishes which all the world embrace.

Be least of all unheeded
Our helpers true and tried;
Whose aid is ever needed,
Whose talent ne'er denied—
Weavers of life's romances,
Poets of tender fancies,
And those to Art according a worship true and wide.

Their pages brightly glowing
About the world we send,
Bright hopes with them are going,
And kindest thoughts attend;
May they be all prevailing
To give delight unfailing,
And with the merry pastimes and joys of Christmas blend!

Again to all a greeting,
Heart-spoken and sincere,
In words whose oft repeating
Palls not on heart or ear;
To all an ample measure
Of health and wealth and pleasure,
A merry, merry Christmas, and happy coming Year!

UNCLE HARTLEBURY'S ROMANCE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY TOLD BY THE SEA.

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

Yes, sir, we *have* met before; and I am delighted to see you again. No, you have made no mistake. I am the Recorder of Miningtown, and the portly lady whom you see yonder in the midst of that assembly of romping children, about to bathe after the fashion of this Boulogne, are my wife and family. Yes, sir, that is Mrs. Hartlebury. Speak louder, *mon ami*, I am slightly deaf. Yes, I do bathe; but the exertion of dressing and undressing in this hot weather is too much for one who, like Falstaff, grows fat and hath grey hairs. Have a cigar? That's right. I know nothing more agreeable than to sit here and watch the sea come rolling in upon those bathers yonder, and especially when you can watch the gambols of your own children, and at the same time let your mind wander out to that wide reach of sea, with sails in the distance.

You are a writer, an author. Yes, I saw your last book at the railway station, and bought it. Ah, I knew you would like me all the more for that. Why don't you reply that you had read my lucid and learned judgment in that remarkable forgery case? Never mind, sir; I am past that sort of thing. I suppose you are on the look out for some bits of fresh character and wayside incidents of travel? No; you are only here for change and rest? You have been up to the cathedral, stood once more on the threshold of Le Sage's house, and refreshed your old memories of the place? Ah, oui!

Old memories! You would hardly credit me, I suppose, with being afflicted by some strange old memories of personal adventure in this place, or any other, for that matter. You would not take an old gentleman with grey hairs, sitting on the beach at Boulogne, whilst his wife and family are bathing, as a fitting subject for the hero of a romance. There are peculiar anomalies in life, you say? That is evasion, sir. I know what you are thinking well enough. I can only tell you this, my friend, that the story of my first appearance here twenty years ago is far more romantic than half the tales told in your magazines, and thought worthy of wonderful illustrations. I am too old to be vain, and I know something of the lights and shadows of life, something of its untold romances, something of its terrible tragedies.

Ah, my friend, twenty years ago I was as slim and dapper and lady-killing as yourself. You do not aspire to the character of a lady-killer? Don't tell me, sir; all young fellows like to make a favourable impression on the other sex. Why are you so carefully shaven to-day? Why is that bit of showy neckerchief so daintily tied? Why those well-fitting grey trousers, and that smart little cane? Simply because you are accustomed to dress well, and aspire to be regarded as a gentleman. Very good; and you are anxious to bid at the same time for those feminine glances which are so flattering to youth. There, don't think I imagine you are a fop; and for heaven's sake don't be annoyed. My criticism is only the result of my own feelings, my own ambition, when I was a young fellow like you. Tell you my story? Yes, if you think it may interest you. It may do for a Christmas paper? Ah, ah! on the look out for copy, eh?—gathering honey all the day from every opening flower. Well, I feel something of the Ancient Mariner's sensations this morning; it will be a relief to tell the story of that extraordinary creature whose face has haunted me ever since I came here two days ago. You will readily consent to play the wedding guest to my mariner? Very well, sir; light another cigar and listen: if I bore you stop me, and we will in to the *Etablissement* and read the papers.

It is all bound up in this bit of faded ribbon, my story: this little scrap here, you see, which is set in that *petit* rim of gold appended to my watch seals. I have never worn the trifle since my marriage until this week. My wife has some pardonable womanly notion that I ought not to wear it, and I have humoured her; for, though I say it, she is one of the best women in the world. Above all others, you think, it is I who should say so? You say well, you say well, my young friend. When we were leaving London last week, it seemed to me that I could not come even here without this little souvenir of that romance twenty years ago. Twenty years ago: how the time flies!

This is the story. I was engaged to Mrs. Hartlebury; she was a Miss Longford. We had been in the habit of seeing each other from the earliest days of our childhood. I ought to have appreciated her kindly loving disposition all the more on this account; but I did not. It had always been understood that we should be married, and in due course this family understanding bore fruit. We were engaged, I and Julia Longford, but on this understanding, that if either one or the other saw any other person whom he or she, the said contracting parties, preferred to the before-mentioned parties to this agreement, then either he or she, the said Thomas Hartlebury and Julia Longford, might terminate the previously recited engagement at one day's notice given by post or orally in the presence of witnesses. Yes, I am getting a little involved, I fear, in this semi-legal phraseology? But you understand the character of that agreement? Yes, and you think it a very convenient engagement? And I thought so, too, sir, a very short time after it was made.

That very summer twenty years ago, with the consent and indeed by the advice of my dear old father, I started on a continental tour, which was to be inaugurated by a visit to Paris, viâ Boulogne, and which terminated somewhat suddenly at the French capital. I was quite as much a buck in those days as you are now, not quite so slim as Falstaff boasted himself to be. I was something more than an eagle's talon in the waist, and I could not creep through an alderman's thumb ring, for I was a strong, well-built young fellow, and not ill-looking; no, sir, not ill-looking. You can readily understand that? Even though I might play the Fat Knight with as little padding as Mark Lemon? It is true, sir, quite true. I can see myself now airing my swell clothes and London manners on the beach here; but there is a sad face rises up beside me, and a figure floating out with the tide yonder which sobers the picture, and makes a shadow upon that sunny water.

Bathing *en famille* was a notion that rather tickled me in those days. You think there is nothing improper in it? Neither do I, sir, or Mrs. Hartlebury and her daughters would not be enjoying themselves as you see them yonder. The "girl of the period" at ball and opera is much more undressed than the ladies in their pretty bathing costumes? I quite agree with you; but my very proper English notions were a little excited at the prospect of the company of lovely mermaidens in a sea bath. I little thought when I went into the water that I was destined to come out with a pretty girl in my arms. Ah, now I see you are interested. What a subject for a modern magazine picture! That is what you are thinking, I know. Don't keep you in suspense? Is that what you said? I told you I was slightly deaf. Did I come out of the water with a young lady in my arms really?

Yes, it was in this way. I was swimming about, and watching the movements of a most graceful person, floating half-sideways, half on her back, with her arms extended, and her head resting on the water; she was drifting out in the sunshine; the water quite placid but swelling like her own bosom beneath a thin blue robe; she was drifting, I say, in the sunshine, like a blessed martyr going out to some better land. I see her now, poor pretty tender-hearted thing, with the sea rocking her in its great arms, and yet trying all the while to steal away her life. I watched her at a respectful distance and swam quietly after her; for somehow it occurred to me that the lady was not quite conscious of the power of that insidious but certain current, which I could feel setting in towards the pier. I had judged aright; by and bye she turned over, evidently with the intention of swimming home, but she could not accomplish her purpose. She struggled on for a little time, and then to all appearance lost her presence of mind, or was attacked with cramp. She disappeared at all events, and I rapidly quickened my pace towards her, putting my head well to the water and dashing on with a sharp side-stroke, which is so effective in the matter of speed. She rose for the second time as I reached the spot. In a moment I had seized her by the shoulder, and supporting her with my left arm, I commenced to swim slowly in the direction of the shore. The young lady's difficulty had been noticed from the beach, and a boat had put off when I swam after her. It came up by the time I was within easy distance of the shore with my beautiful, half-drowned burthen, and I helped to place her in the boat amidst a loud cheer. I got in after her, and was delighted to see signs of rapid recovery in the dear creature. Satisfied with this, and not caring to present myself in my Blondin-like costume to a fashionable and excited throng, I dashed into the water and swam to my machine.

If Mrs. Hartlebury and those girls would do the same it would be just as well. They have been in the water too long already. You don't think so? Mrs. Hartlebury is the best judge of that? I had better proceed with my story, you are getting interested? You want to know what the young lady was like? Like, sir, like no young lady in Boulogne at the present day, or anywhere else that I have seen for beauty. She was like a poet's dream, sir, or an artist's fancy. Was she a blonde? Not exactly, no; she had brown wavy hair, and such eyes, such a figure! Arms as round and fair as the arms of those women by Rubens in the Louvre—a neck and shoulders in which all the lines of beauty were described. I saw her on that next day after her narrow escape; she found me out, and came to the Hotel des Bains to thank me. "I must excuse her," she said, "for calling unattended, she had no friends in Boulogne." "One at least," I said, taking her hand, and faltering in my speech. She looked up inquiringly at me for a moment with her dark big eyes, and I felt myself gradually becoming powerless in her presence, anxious to say all sorts of gracious things but unable to do so. "Good-bye, and believe me I shall never forget your brave action." She spoke with a pretty musical French accent. "May I not see you again?" I asked, and then bolder grown I answered my own question: "I must, indeed I must." "I am going to Paris in the morning. I have been to London, and am on my way to Paris. I fear I must say good-bye now, monsieur." "Oh no," I said, feeling as if I were about to lose everything dear to me in the world. "I love you, mademoiselle; I love you, I will make you my wife." "Oh, monsieur, that can never be," she replied. "Why not?" I exclaimed, becoming desperate. "Do not ask?" she said sadly. "You could not love me," I said, sitting down and covering my face with my hands. "There was a time, monsieur, when what you have just said would have awakened a passion of pleasure and gratitude in my heart; but oh, sir, that time is past; adieu, *mon très cher ami*; you will always live in my dearest memory."

She left me, and this only made me more fiercely in love with her. I did not seem to be master of my actions, and I was selfish enough to think that I had a special claim upon her. I rescued her from death, and that ought to make her mine. If she would have had me, I would have married her, sir, right off, and should have felt myself blessed. How long would that sentiment have lasted? Heaven knows. I followed her, found out her hotel, returned her call, and made her promise to see me in Paris. My next action was to discover by what train she travelled, and on the following day I was on the platform, and constituted myself the lady's *compagnon de voyage*. At first she seemed a little disconcerted at this, but as we journeyed onwards she brightened up, and became chatty and sparkling and lively. Every now and then all this was darkened, like a summer landscape with passing thunder clouds. Once when the other stupid passengers were asleep I pressed her hand. She returned me a gentle pressure, and with the tears in her eyes she whispered in such heartfelt accents that almost brought the tears to mine, "Oh, my dear, dear friend!" It seemed like a cry of despair from a breaking heart, and I felt as if a terrible grief was seizing upon me.

You really would not have given me credit for so much romance? Of course not, it seems ridiculous to you now, looking at the portly Recorder and his romping responsibilities yonder. Ah, I am glad the girls are coming out of the water. It does not matter so much about Frank, and Tom, and Harry, they are strong fellows, and will have *café-noir* and cigars afterwards to keep up the circulation. You object to these interruptions? These changes from romance to reality, eh?—from the sublime to the ridiculous! On our arrival at the Northern Station at Paris, Louise and I, you know, her name was Louise, I think I said before; on our arrival, a placid, mysterious, light moustached old German came up to us. He kissed the young lady on the cheek, and then scowlingly looked at me. Lousie began therefore to talk German to him with many gesticulations, explaining the small service I had rendered her. He smiled, I thought, a little sarcastically, and looked incredulously at me; but Mademoiselle stamped her foot angrily at Mein Herr Diable, and he condescended to look civilly upon me. "We must part here," she said hurriedly to me. "What is your hotel?" "The Imperial," I said. "Place Vendome." "You must not call on me. I will call upon you to-night. For heaven's sake be satisfied with this." I got to my hotel in a dreamy sort of humour, ordered private rooms, and said I expected a lady to call in the evening; I should not go out until she came, and they must show her up. It seemed ages that I waited for her: I waited until they relieved guard at the Napoleon Column, and marched by the Rue St. Honoré with their drums and trumpets. I waited until my heart was sick with fears and doubts; and at last I received a short note, in which the writer said I might see her on the next night at the Arc de l'Etoile at ten o'clock; but if I really loved her, and wished to cherish the memory of her as something sweet and dear, I ought to see her no more. She offered no apology for keeping me waiting. I kissed her note, and yet smote the table with passion, and stamped about the room with rage. That silent, disgusting German was the cause of all this! Who was he? What was he? I asked myself, but I was never enabled to answer the question. He was a strange, unfathomable mystery.

On the following night I was at the Arch of Triumph an hour before the trysting-time, with a longing heart and a brain half dazed with the glare and glitter of the long rows of gas lamps, and the wandering carriage-lights. The scene was to me then one of such unaccustomed splendour, that it seemed as if I had been dropped here by fate to play a part in some Arabian Night's story. She came at last, my charmer, muffled up half in disguise, running, I thought, from one who claims her love to one who prays for it as the greatest blessing heaven or earth can give. We walked to the shadow of an adjacent tree, and sat down; she suffered me to clasp her in my arms. Again I offered her my hand; talked to her of arrangements for the future; indicated the sort of letter I would write to my father by the very next post. A mad thing to do? I must have been off my head? Ah, so would you have been in the presence of that matchless beauty. I never saw so much loveliness in mortal being; and even after all these years have elapsed, I cannot condemn my judgment in that respect. We wandered about those walks in the Bois de Boulogne, and sat beneath the trees, and talked of a hundred happy things that only lovers' lips can say. At last she confessed she loved me with all her heart. "I have never known what love is until now," she said, "my dear, dear friend; and I understand its sweetness, its purity, when it is too late, too late, my dear monsieur." "Why too late, Louise?" I asked; and then, prepared to learn the worst, I said, "You are not married already?" "Oh, no," she said. "Nor betrothed?" I asked, hurrying question upon question. "Cease, cease, I pray you," she exclaimed, in a passion of despair. "Seek to know no more: I can never be yours: I love you too much." "You are mine, Louise; I snatched you from the grave. It was fate that brought me to your side. Death came between us, and I struck him down. You are mine by all laws human and divine." She sobbed at this, laid her head on my shoulder, and, in a wail of despair, said, "Oh, would I were! Would it might be possible! Oh, sir, do not tempt me: do not; pray, do not, Your love would end in hate." "My dear Louise, I am prepared to brave all things." "I am not prepared to brave your scorn," she said. "Death were bliss to that. Let me go, sir. Farewell!" "No, no," I said, detaining her. "I will raise an alarm," she cried. "Cruel, cruel," I replied. "O, mon Dieu, monsieur!" she exclaimed, and then kissing me on the forehead she said, "You see yon distant lights on the right, and that great cluster in the Champs Elysée?" "Yes." "It is Monsieur Victor's Café Chantant. I will see you once again. Let it be there, to-morrow night, at ten." "You will not deceive me?" I said, letting her hand go very reluctantly. "That is what I will not do for all the world," she replied solemnly, and raising her eyes to heaven. "I will *not* deceive you." "My dear Louise!" I said. She looked so beautiful in the star-light. "Better say adieu, now, and for ever!" was her response. "But if it must be, au revoir! Be it so!" "Au revoir!" broke from my lips. She slipped away from me and disappeared.

The long rows of lights, the distant sounds of music mocked my despair. I look back now, and know what a mad fellow I was; but I do not blame myself, and I learnt how heroic woman can be, the most abandoned, when the divine chord of love is really touched by the master hand. Poor lost Louise, she was a martyr for my sake! I can see now, out yonder where the sun is making a long track over the waters, I can see a half-clad figure drifting, drifting, floating away into the darker shade,—drifting out into the mist where sea and sky unite and are lost in each other. What creatures of circumstance we are! Ah, there's my wife yonder beckoning to Frank and Harry. The girls are nearly dressed by this time, and yonder are the boys plunging about as if they had only just gone in. There they are, sir, within fifty yards of the spot where I rescued Louise from drowning twenty years ago! All right, my friend; don't be unhappy. My romance will soon be at an end. You think I tell the story well? I am quite eloquent, you say? Ah, it is the eloquence that earnestness gives, I suppose. It does me good to tell you this romance of mine; it has been in my mind at odd times, as if it demanded utterance, for years.

You may be sure I went to that café the next night. There was a clear sky and a full moon. The effect of the contending lights of the café and the moon amongst the foliage of the Champs Elysée was weird and magical. It seemed to carry my mind back to a wonderful representation I had seen at a London theatre of "Faust and Marguerite." Then the woodland scene of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," broke into that memory. I was not myself, I often think, all through this piece. I know that it shocked me a little when I found myself amongst a crowd of men and women who were drinking and smoking in this beautiful spot and applauding an indecent dance, and it shocked me all the more to think that it was here that Louise had selected to meet me, her lover. Then I thought what a prude I was, and remembered how different were French ideas of these things to ours in England. I would soon coax Louise out of all this semi-barbarous indifference to the proprieties when I had her in England and made her my wife. Whilst I was thinking in this wise, a terrific burst of applause brought my wandering eyes back to the stage. A lady was smiling and bowing her acknowledgments. My heart beat wildly at sight of her. The applause rose again, higher and higher. "Who is this?" I said excidedly to a gentleman who was crowded close up against me. "Do you not know?" he said in French. "Mademosielle Victor, it is her first appearance this season; she has just returned from England." O my friend, I thought I should have lost my breath altogether. There was nothing improper in her bathing dress: she might have walked down Bond street in it; but the costume in which she now appeared was the wildest kind of ballet dress I had ever seen. She sung with intense vigour in a rich ringing voice, and to the chorus she danced in a voluptuous siren-like fashion that seemed to belong rather to a figure out of Etty's picture than to anything earthly. From this movement she changed her gambols into a mad sort of Mabille dance, in the midst of which she uttered a piercing scream and threw herself upon the floor in the glare and glitter of the footlights. I thought I should go mad, I pushed my way with desperation to the stage to assure myself that I was not the victim of some horrible delusion. They had lifted her up and carried her into the retiring room. I forced my way in; but I should have been violently ejected, had not that old German caught sight of me and snatched me out of the grasp of several yelling rascals who had nearly overpowered me. This mysterious person was evidently a great authority there. Louise opened her eyes, and seeing me said, "O, my God," and covered her face with her hands. That sneaking German frowned at me, but happily allowed me to remain.

In a few minutes Mademoiselle had recovered sufficiently for the manager to go out and tell the audience she would reappear shortly. In the midst of the shout of applause which greeted this declaration, Louise rose to her feet and called for champagne. She drank the wine greedily, and then, turning to me, said, "There, monsieur, I told you it could not be: I said I would not deceive you. Adieu! God guard you." She took the manager's arm, and he led her once more upon the stage. The old German stood there looking at me like Mephistopheles in the play. I staggered to the door, slipped like a drunkard out into the night, threw myself upon the grass just beyond the enclosure of that painted hell, and wept like a child.

Bravo, Frank! That was a splendid dive; but I'm glad it is the last; you have certainly had enough of the water for this morning. That's right, my dear boy. Better finish my story before they all come and interrupt us? Is that what you said? *Trés bien*, but one requires a little interval now and then to keep down the full rush of all the old feeling; mind you, I am enacting all this story over again whilst I am narrating it to you. And story-telling is warm work in the hottest days of August. You mean to tell it when the weather is cold? Eh?—in a Christmas Annual? Well, I have no objection, only keep my name out of the story, and don't let me be pointed at as the hero. You believe Mrs. Hartlebury is coming? Well, light another cigar, and we will come to the "Finis."

I passed a miserable night. I lay there on the grass I know not how long, and then I wandered home. I drank a pint of brandy and threw myself upon the bed undressed. I don't think I slept a wink. Early in the morning that pale pig's-eyed-looking German called upon me, and in a few authoritative words in broken English, bade me accompany him on a little visit. He led the way across the Pont St. Michel to the centre of the Marché Neuf, where we entered a small square building. It was the Morgue! The old Morgue, a much more wretched place than the present edifice. On our left hand there were large windows guarded by a rail, and beyond was the chamber of death. It nearly made me sick to see several dead bodies lying there. I shuddered and clung to my companion. He looked coldly on and pointed to a pink dress and some lace that was hanging in the furthest corner; and then, oh, mercy! I saw *her* body, cold and white and still. There it lay in awful companionship! I think I must have fainted at sight of the poor lost woman, with her brown hair all damp and clinging to her white round shoulders. I remembered nothing until I found myself on a sofa in a well-furnished room. My senses were no sooner restored to me than that horrible German with the light moustache and the cold greenish eye came in, and deliberately seizing me by the throat, he began to shake and curse me. I felt like a child in his hands, I was so weak and faint, and all the sensations of approaching death came over me. I must have cried out and struggled, I suppose, for a woman rushed into the room, and dragged my assailant from me; he left me with an oath; and the woman, a strong, wilful-looking creature, led me into an adjoining room. I could hardly stand, but I was nevertheless strong enough and sensible enough to take the woman's advice and get out of that house. I stumbled down two pairs of stairs and found my way into the street, where I obtained a cab and went to my hotel. I found a letter which had been delivered by the post: it was written in French. The words were—"I loved you truly. I was unworthy of you; that is why you will never see your poor Louise again; here is a souvenir of her who blesses you with her last breath."

That souvenir was a small locket fastened to a piece of blue ribbon. I need not tell you how deeply it affected me. During the night which followed these hours of mystery and terror and grief I slept the sleep of one who is at last exhausted in mind and body. I was awakened after midnight by the proprietor of the house who entered with a candle, and in some little excitement asked me if there was not something wrong. I was out of bed in an instant. "What is wrong, sir?" I asked. "I think your bedroom has been robbed, if I have not disturbed the thief," he replied. "I saw a fellow prowling about before I went to bed, and as soon as I was awakened by the grating of a lock I got up and rang my bell. This was foolish; I ought to have gone and caught the thief. In another minute I heard a door shut; a stealthy step passed my room, and before I could follow my light was out, his cloak over my head, and Jacques here has come to say that they are after a fellow who leaped from a second floor window, and made off along the Rue St. Honoré." This was the host's story so far as I could make out. We examined the room. My valise had been cut open, sure enough, and there lay beside it a great clasp knife which had done the business. Louise's little note was gone, her locket had been torn away from the ribbon, and a packet of letters from England had been carried off. I shall always believe that German was the thief, and it seemed to me at the time that if he had not been disturbed he would have murdered me. He had evidently some mysterious power, or wished to have, over Louise. I stood in his way; how, I cannot understand; but it was so. Her liking for me was to him a terrible grievance: he had searched for letters and other tokens of our acquaintanceship. I told the hotel-keeper I had had a narrow escape, that knife was intended for something more desperate than cutting open a valise. Fancy, if he had murdered me, you would have seen no fat, sentimental Recorder on the beach at Boulogne; and that happy-looking regiment of children coming from the machines yonder would not have been in existence. You are very much obliged to that German devil for not cutting my throat? And I thank my host of the Imperial for disturbing him before he had time to carry out his fell scheme.

Well, sir, to conclude, as the parson says. I put that bit of ribbon which the thief had left behind him into my pocket, took the next train to Calais, the next boat to Dover, returned to my father's house, and married Miss Longford. We are a thoroughly happy pair, as you have already had judgment enough to note. My children are good, contented, and numerous, as you see; and if that will make a story for Christmas, my friend, you are quite welcome to it, and you can call it Uncle Hartlebury's Romance.

MY LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

BY HARRY LEMON.

PART I.

On the 4th of August, 18—, I remember waking with a feeling as if I had been relieved of a terrific load from my shoulders, or had taken off a tight pair of boots after a long journey, or had paid my tailor and hosier, and taken up Jinks's bill at the last moment. Yes, I was out of harness for two whole months. My desk—a hateful brown lumbering piece of furniture, with little green curtains round it which smelt like damp cloth—was safely locked for two months. Sixty-one days! Sixty-one days of freedom from the slavery of the law! In lieu of existing in the dullest office in one of the dullest streets in smoky London, I should be living in the prettiest little sea coast village in North Wales, surrounded by mountains and pretty cousins—one of whom I loved above all worldly gifts, and she had returned my passion with all the fervency of a woman's first love. So, with the lightest of hearts, though not with the heaviest of purses, I started at 6 a.m. for Dongelly.

My aunt was a widow, with the kindest heart in the world—a heart that bled at the thought of misery, and ached at the thought of wickedness of all kinds; unselfish, charitable, pleasant in face and manner, which gained for herself the title of the "Good Mother of Calder House." Calder House was a sturdy-built mansion, standing on the foot of a mountain which towered above it for many hundred feet, and sheltered the homestead from the fierce north winds for which Wales is so noted. The sea rose almost to the end of the sloping lawn in front, and in bad weather I have known it to wash over the wall which served as a boundary between the sandy beach and the garden.

"The House" was of no particular style of architecture, being entirely devoid of ornament except what nature had bestowed upon it, namely, covering it with strong healthy ivy and honeysuckle. How vividly does the old house rise before me now on this hot drowsy afternoon, as I sit in my little room overlooking that dreariest of pictures—a London yard. Even the sight of the smoke-dried patch of London Pride and the dissipated, seedy-looking wallflowers recalls to my hot imagination the well-kept geranium beds of the dear old Dongelly grounds. The roar of the traffic outside brings to my memory the roaring of that dreadful sea—one day so calm and inviting, the next so angry and repelling. My landlady's daughter comes laughing from the house, with her long hair hanging down her back—her face is brighter and less pale than when she left London a few weeks ago for Margate—the change has done her worlds of good, her mother says, but I would fain that she had not come under my window when my thoughts were wandering back to my young days, for recollections of a bright young girl come rushing through my brain, and when I have gazed round my poor lonely room I am unable to keep back a sigh, and after uttering some uncomplimentary remarks about man in general and woman in particular, I draw my blind down, and scribble away for bread and cheese. Walk, walk! says Douglas Jerrold, if you wish to get rid of trouble. Write, write! I say. If you are dumpy, write of a merry party under green trees and sunshine; if you are poor, write of riches till you get a surfeit of them, and you'll like your poverty for a change; if you are in love—but there, my foolish pen has run I don't know where when it ought to have been quietly in Wales.

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I arrived at my aunt's on a bright hot evening in August. I was introduced to several other people, but I need not make special notice of any with the exception of two—Arthur Blair and his sister Florence. The former was a tall, handsome fellow, with short, crisp, curly, black hair, dark laughing eyes, and a slight well-trimmed beard. He wore a light shooting jacket, grey knickerbockers, and a wide-awake hat, with his College Cricket Club's ribbon round it. He welcomed me warmly, and made some remark about the "jolly place," and the fun that was in store for me. Slight as his remarks were, I felt that I had found a good fellow in Blair. His sister, Florence Blair, was a tall, handsome girl, with brown hair and large wondering eyes. Good serviceable flirting optics, her brother termed them. She had the gift of being able to enter into easy conversation without embarrassing herself or her companion. "When you have a minute to spare I want to show you the new aquarium; I very particularly wish to show you it before anybody else does," said she to me. Now aquariums are very nice interesting things in their way, but when a young "hot-hearted" fellow has not seen his sweetheart—excuse the word, readers, it's old-fashioned, but to *me* so pretty—for six months, aquariums lose much of their charms; for, when you are urged to mark the vagaries of a tittlebat, or the eccentricities of growth in a piece of sea-weed, your thoughts are often prone to wander to the aforesaid sweetheart, who has evidently gone into the drawing-room in order that you may follow. Grace had, after a few words, slipped into the house. I hinted that I should be delighted any time after dinner; but Miss Blair pleaded so earnestly to be the first to show it me that I could do nothing less than consent. It was some little distance to the conservatory, and for a few minutes we walked side by side without exchanging a word. At last she broke the silence by enquiring—"How do you think Grace Reynolds looks?"

"Charming!" I answered without hesitation, "I think that she has improved vastly; she's quite a woman since I saw her last."

"Yes," slowly replied Florence, with just the slightest indication of a sneer, "*She's quite a woman now;* she was all but a wild schoolgirl freed from slates and thick bread and butter when you last saw her." I own I did not like Miss Blair's brief description of my love, but as it was no business of hers, and as I had no intention of making her my *confidante* I remarked that it was very calm at sea.

"Yes, Mr. Fowler, very calm at present; see, here is the aquarium; please to shut the green-house door, I have something to say to you." I obeyed, and wondering what the strange young lady had to reveal, begged her to tell me the "something" without delay.

"First shake hands with me, George Fowler, and promise that you will never upbraid me for speaking to you as I am about to do. I have met you in person but one hour ago, and yet I know you as if you had been an intimate acquaintance for many months—since you took Gracie Reynolds home from the Dawson's party, two years ago. I knew your good qualities; I have heard of your grand doings on the Amateur Concert Stage, of your proficiency in dancing, and cleverness in writing poetry. I was Gracie's *confidante* until lately—barely two weeks since we quarrelled. Don't look surprised, Mr. Fowler. I am not going into the details of a woman's squabble. I have brought you here to see the fish and to make a confession." She paused for a moment, and then slowly drew from her pocket a letter. "This letter was written by Grace to you two weeks ago, and given to me to post; I detained it."

"Miss Blair!" I exclaimed. "I cannot understand you."

"So many tell me," was her cool rejoinder. "I kept it back, George Fowler, because it was written by Grace when she was mad—mad as the wretch that throws away God's life to drive away earth's misery. Let me tear it up. For pity's sake don't read her cruel words, for they may bury poison in your heart—a poison never to be extracted. Let me tell you. She wrote to break her engagement with you, and bid you not come down this year to Calder House; prayed you to make some excuse at the last moment. But I tell you she was mad—mad when she wrote the wicked words." And then Florence Blair tore the letter into a hundred pieces, whilst I looked on unable to prevent the destruction, for a sudden chill seemed settling on my heart, and my brain seemed paralysed. When I recovered myself I found that I was alone, the sun had set behind the restless sea, and the dinner bell was ringing. I gathered a few of the torn fragments of the mysterious letter together, placed them in my pocketbook, and left for Calder House—confused, unsettled, and unhappy.

* * * * *

I entered the dining room and found the guests already assembled, and a shout of laughter greeted my ears.

"Hullo, Arthur!" said aunt, "we thought you had at least fallen down the well, or been washed away by the sea."

"I've been looking at the aquarium, getting an appetite;" or some such nonsense, was my reply, and I took the vacant chair.

"You do not seem very much pleased at seeing me, Grace?" I said.

"Do I not? I suppose you wished me to follow you and that young lady to the aquarium? It was unkind of you, George, not to follow me into the house this morning. You know I wished to speak to you about that letter you sent to me two weeks ago."

I replied as calmly as my self-possession would allow me.

"You did not get my letter," she said, turning quickly on me with a look of alarm. "It was never sent."

"True, Grace; but I have learned the contents, and I must hear from your lips that they are true. Are we to break our engagement?"

"Not unless you wish to. I was hasty and foolish, and forgot my duty to you, mamma, and the girls. I am thankful the letter was not sent you. I am glad that you know the purport of the missive. It would have been my duty to have told you of it, and it would have been unpleasant. Don't look stupid, George, everybody is noticing you; but go on with your dinner."

Whether it was beef, mutton, veal, made dish, or what not, I never could remember; the knowledge was quite enough for me that I was seated by the side of the girl I loved, that she was beautiful and good and true to me after all I'd heard that morning.

PART II.

I have a very difficult task to perform, and I am sadly afraid I shall be unable to accomplish it. I wish to draw a picture of a man, uncertain in his own inner mind whether or no the girl who holds his heart has freely given hers willingly and with pleasure in exchange. I wish him to struggle to believe that he is certain of her love, but day by day the cold truth is forced on him, till at last his life by day is a forced piece of acting, and by night a restless slumber, broken by meaningless dreams, and followed by hopeless wakings. I, and a thousand more, have undergone the ordeal, and maybe, to those who are happy in their love and hopeful in the future, cannot bring their minds to realize the picture I have striven to draw. I knew, after my first week in Wales, that Grace had ceased to love me, for what reason I had no idea. I had always been affectionately attentive to her—humouring every whim, and studying to make her happy, but of no avail. At length I determined to make one bold effort to regain her, and if I failed, to bear my burden as bravely as I could. One evening I was sitting under one of the trees smoking a cigar, and lazily watching the waves dashing against the rocks, when I heard something that went through my heart like a knife. My cousins and some other girls were seated on the grass, a few yards from me, and as the wind was blowing towards me I distinctly heard Edith say to her youngest sister—"Grace, you ought to go to poor George,—he's going away in a week, and you will not meet again for many months. Go, the poor fellow has been trying all day to be near you."

Grace heaved a sigh, and languidly rising said, "Oh, bother!" and walked towards me. Yes, romantic reader, "Oh, bother!" ran through my heart. I pretended not to notice her approach, and when she placed her hand upon my shoulder and said, "George, dear, what makes you so dull?" I only lifted up my eyes to hers and said, "Oh bother!" She sat by my side and our conversation was stupid and commonplace, and it was a great relief to both of us when the tea was announced. I did not care for tea and left Grace at the door; we did not meet again till the next morning at breakfast, for I found on my return to supper that Miss Grace had gone to bed, pleading a headache for an excuse.

On gaining my room and feeling no inclination to sleep, I opened the window and looked out over the sea. Some of the girls were walking in the grounds beneath, enjoying the cool of the evening, and amongst them I recognised to my surprise Grace walking with Florence Blair. They were in earnest conversation, and now and then would stop suddenly, and by their movements I knew they were talking in anger. One by one the others went into the house, but Grace and Florence still walked side by side. I extinguished my candle, and after a time my ears caught the following hastily-spoken words:

"You have driven him from me, girl," said Florence, "driven him away from his home to a land where fever and loneliness will kill him. You will have his death at your own door, Grace."

"I tell you, Florence," replied Grace in a soft voice, "it is too late; were he to remain in this land I should never be happy."

"But," rejoined the other, "if you knew him to be wearing his young years out in a treacherous climate you would be satisfied and settle down as the domesticated wife of George Fowler."

"Don't speak like that, Florence," cried Grace; "you know how it has pained me to see poor George's changed looks and manners; how I have watched his spirit breaking; how I have striven to keep him in my heart; but I cannot, *dear, I cannot ever love him.*"

She was very beautiful, with her long hair flowing down her back, and her pitiful look pleading as it were for comfort from Florence's stern dark eyes.

"You can never love him?"

"Never! But I will be his wife. I will be true, and do my duty to him. I will, indeed," she exclaimed.

They then walked on, and their voices were lost in the roaring of the sea. I watched their forms vanishing in the distance, and then I threw myself upon my bed, and after some time fell into a light but fitful sleep. When I awoke—I do not know how long I had slept—I heard footsteps pacing up and down on the gravel walk, and on looking from my window saw Grace wrapped in a thick shawl leaning on the arm of Arthur Blair. I was not staggered. I did not feel hurt. But an indescribable numbness took possession of me. This was the man who had grasped my hand not an hour ago and told me to cheer up, that the course of true love had never yet flowed smoothly! I left my room, and as silently as possible descended the stairs and entered the garden unobserved. I saw him stoop and kiss her forehead, and she broke away from him evidently with an effort. He walked towards the sea-shore. I followed him.

"You were talking to Miss Reynolds a moment ago, Blair," I said, as calmly as I could.

He looked me full in the face, and taking my arm said, "My good friend, I am in honour bound to give you an explanation, although, as I said before, it would have been better for both Grace's sake and your own if you had not seen our parting just now. You have no doubt guessed in what estimation I regard your cousin Grace. She was my first love, and will be my last. I did not know, on my honour, that she was engaged to you when I spoke to her, neither do I think that she felt herself bound to you when she heard my avowal, but her sisters pointed out the wrong she was doing. You and she bade me never mention the subject again—nor did I. I made up my mind to meet you as a friend, and I have more than once, when I have noticed your cousin's coolness towards you, remonstrated with her, and, as Heaven knows, I have tried to turn her heart from mine to yours. Believe or disbelieve me as you will, but I have told you the truth. To-night I said 'Good-bye' to her for ever, and my luggage is on board the good ship *Richmond Castle*, bound for Calcutta. And now, good night, George Fowler."

I shook his hand, and he strolled indoors without another word. I do not think he could have said much more, for his utterance at last was very forced. I soon followed him, and as I passed my Grace's room I heard her sobbing bitterly. I thought she murmured the name of him she loved, and it seemed as if it came from a breaking heart.

* * * * *

The *Richmond Castle* was to start on the Thursday, two days after what I had learned from Cardiff; and as I had nothing particular to do, I thought I might as well have a run down and see the ship that Arthur Blair was to sail in. I said nothing to anybody of my intention, but after breakfast I kissed Grace and told her that I was going for a walk.

"You will not leave until I return?" said I to Blair.

"No; I have had a note this morning to say that all is ready, so I shall have nothing to do but walk on board to-morrow."

Poor Grace! I arrived at Cardiff, saw the ship and captain—a nice old fellow, and the very kind of man one would care to trust one's life to. I then went into the coffee-room of the hotel and wrote three letters—one to my old employer, one to Grace, and one to Arthur Blair.

I need only give the last one here; the others can be imagined:—

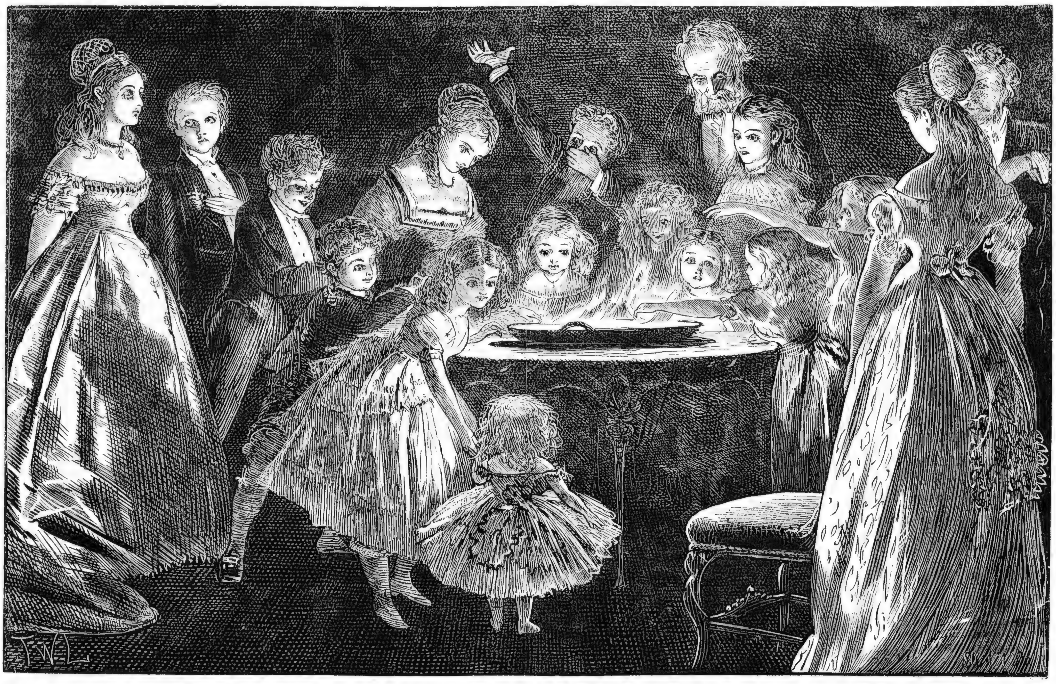
Dear Arthur Blair,

I have seen your ship and your berth, and everything is as clean as a new pin and as cozy as a bachelor's smoking-room—so cozy that I am not going to give them up even to you. I enquired of the captain and he tells me the passage-money will be forfeited if you cannot find a substitute. Old fellow, India would not agree with you or little Grace—it will with me. I have friends in plenty, all doing well, who have asked me to come over often and often. Circumstances at one day stopped me, but now I am free, why shouldn't I try my hand at making a fortune as well as anybody else? I'm not a prig, and promise some day to repay you for your outfit and your passage money, for I have I am sure left you at Calder House the worth of what I take. Don't think I wish ever to be looked upon as a martyr. I pray from my heart for your happiness. Thank your sister for all her kindness to me, and Believe me,

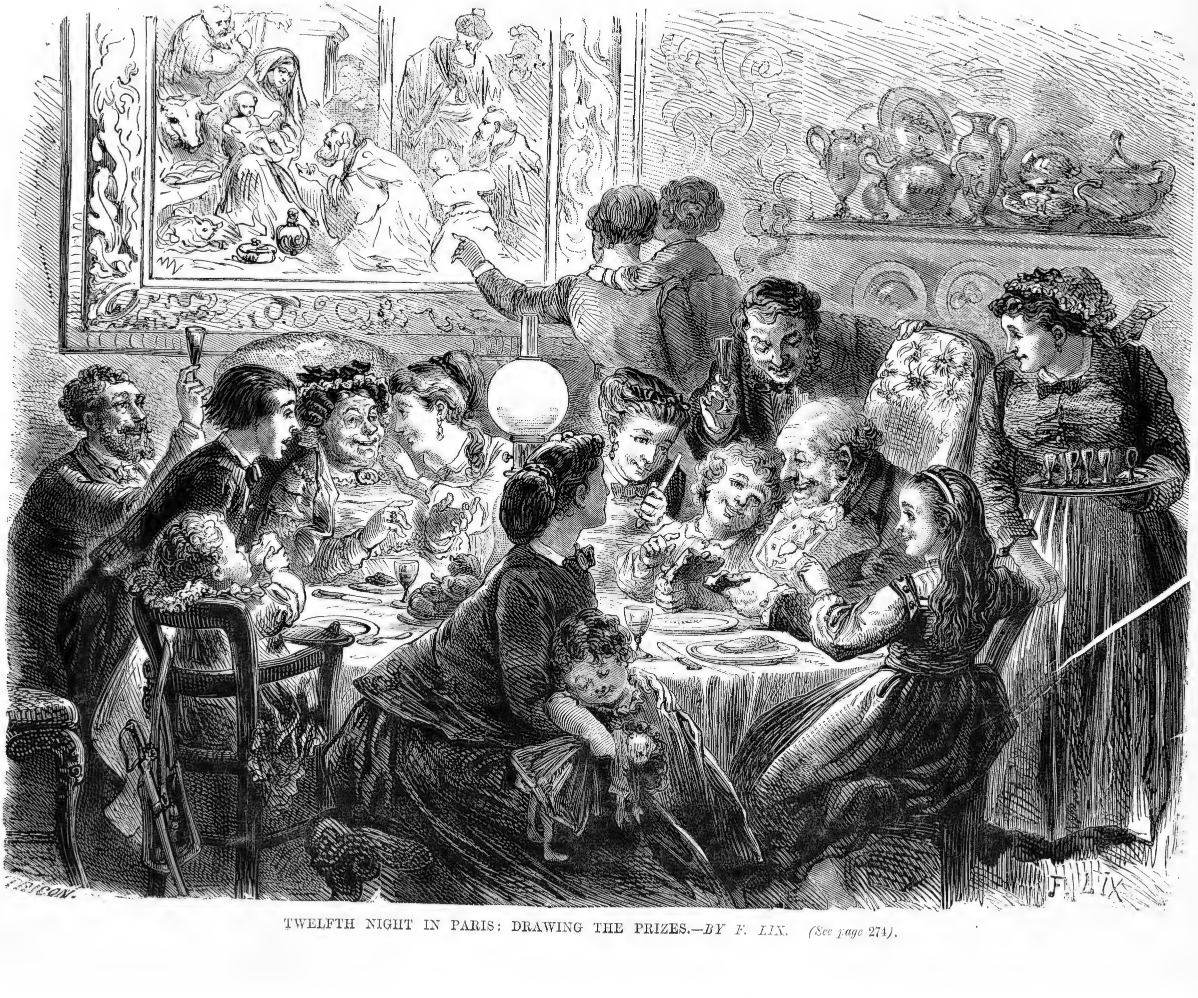
Yours truly,
George Fowler.

The ship sailed and arrived in India. I found it hard to get employment, for my friends wrote better than they acted. I yearned for England, but I could not leave until I learned by the post that Grace Reynolds was Mrs. Blair.

I am still a bachelor—not a disagreeable one, I hope, but somehow or another I could not feel easy until I had roughly sketched out my little love story, to be laughed at as a freak of wicked Cupid.



CHRISTMAS EVE IN ENGLAND: SNAPDRAGON.—*BY F. W. LAWSON.* *(See page 278).*



TWELFTH NIGHT IN PARIS: DRAWING THE PRIZES.—*BY F. LIX.* *(See page 274).*

MODERN CHRISTMAS.

BY WALTER MAYNARD.

Away with ceremony—down with fine airs and graces—false appearances avaunt—let us be ourselves, that is to say if we are not very disagreeable people, in which case let us for the nonce put on some pleasant disguise. It is Christmas time—the children's time by right, the most delightful time in all the year, when stiff dinner parties, formal morning calls, and other stately proceedings are set aside in favour of more thoroughly enjoyable meetings of friends, relations, and acquaintances, when animosities should be forgotten, and good fellowship among all woman and mankind prevail.

We are not of those who believe that the olden times were merrier than those we live in. Even were they so, it is better to strive and make the present good old times for days to come, than to lament enjoyments in which we had no share. Let our Christmas doings be spoken of glowingly hereafter and be associated with the true spirit of hospitality.

All the antiquarian legends ever told of the noisy revelry said to have resounded throughout old England a century ago are not half so cheering to listen to as a burst of laughter from a group of children of the present day. If you think otherwise, and are fond of vain regrets, go to your books, or at any rate refrain from spoiling the fun of others by grumbling aloud. Or, stay, you will find capital food for reflection in the Christmas party our artist has sketched on the front page of this Number.

You can take your place in a corner and derive instruction—more than from any dusty volumes—by carefully observing the characteristics here present, and if you wish to philosophise and give a spice of melancholy to your thoughts, which some people so much enjoy, picture to yourself the future careers of the children—the troubles and sorrows which inevitably await them. For our part we dismiss all such dreary imaginings, and at Christmas time, as at all times, rejoice to see the youngsters and hear their hearty laughter.

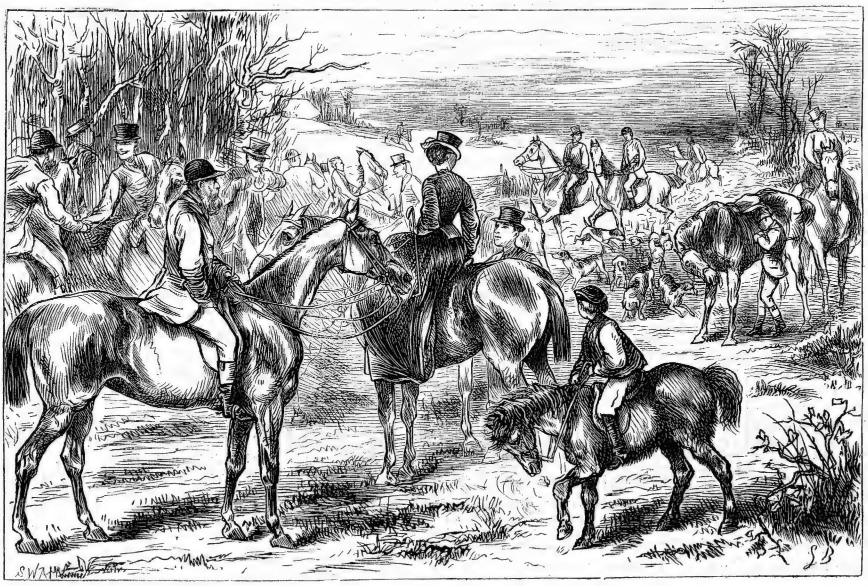
"They are better than
all the ballads
That ever were sung
or said."

Sad thoughts will now and then arise, aye, and perhaps always haunt us, in spite of ourselves, but we indulge in them alone and don't allow them to sully the happiness around.

How pleasantly those few but awful moments preceding dinner pass away, now that the guests are not all grown-up men and women! A brighter presence than theirs animates a scene which at most times is as solemn as though it were the introduction to some impending sacrifice. They who dread the formalities of society and have but a limited supply of small talk, must like Christmas of the period, if only for the reason that children reign everywhere supreme while it lasts. At home, in the theatres, in the streets, it must be a hard heart that does not experience some yearning towards the little ones at this season of the year. It is difficult to define the age at which boys and girls now emerge from childhood. Kate and Jessie are as yet lively companions. They talk to you unreservedly, have no fear of you after a short introduction, care not whether you are a soldier, a sailor, or what you are so long as you amuse them, tell them a story, and allow them to do as they like with you. Not so Miss Eugenia, a very few years older, the prim young lady whose education being finished is now devoting herself to the art of marrying well. She fears to speak, she is so bashful, or very dignified, and considers you beneath her notice. The same with the boys. Georgie and Tommy are famous fellows for a romp, they mind not what is said of them if they can only make a noise; but Frank, who has recently attained the honour of a tail coat, he has given up boyish tricks; he resents being numbered with his younger brothers and sisters, and tries to look as grave as he sees older men do before dinner. If that solemn time be enlivened by the children, how much more so is the feast itself? Look at the long table, radiant with their sunny smiles, and made more brilliant by their chubby faces than by all the gay flowers with which it is decorated.

They are serious enough for the first five minutes, but silence once broken, the cheery laughter breaks forth and they talk merrily. Eugenia is of course sedate, and Frank more or less serious, and careful not to disarrange the flower in his button hole. Kate and Georgie, much to the scandal of their elder sister opposite, are pulling crackers before the first course is removed. Tommy asks boldly when the champagne will be opened, and Jessie is flirting with an old gentleman who has his arm round her waist. The rest of the party, exhilarated by the increasing merriment of the children, laugh and talk more freely than they are wont to do. The restraint of formality gradually wears away, and the stranger at table is made to feel familiar with those around by an all-pervading influence for which he may not be able to account.

If we have forgotten some old customs—if our barons of beef and boars' heads are not so large as they were formerly—if good old carols are less frequently sung—if it be true, as some assert, that we have become more matter of fact and are less romantic, or rather less boisterous, than our ancestors, yet as long as there are children among us and their innocent revelry rejoices our hearts, we can always, if we will, pass a merry Christmas—a time which is now more than ever identified with the amusements of the young. Long may it be so, the pleasures of the past be thus renewed, and the children's time be really a time of rejoicing for the young and old!



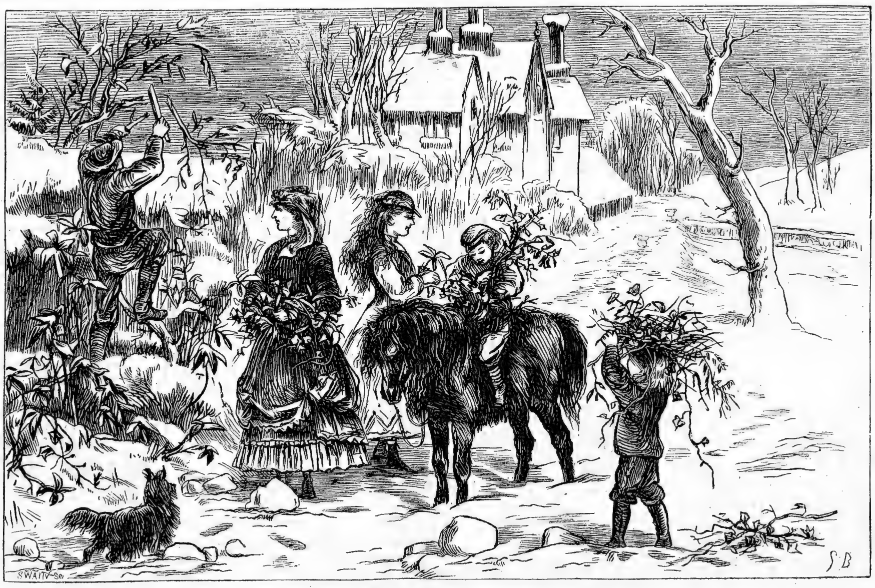
THE CHRISTMAS MEET.—*BY G. BOWERS.*

GATHERING THE GREEENERY.

If you have been staying at a country house a week before Christmas you will know the excitement that prevails through the whole of the household, from "the squire" and the lady of the manor down to the youngest of the children, concerning the important matter of decorations. Supposing the delightful task of garnishing the village-church with evergreens and holly (the Druidical plant is tabooed, you know, by both rector and curate) to have been completed, and the flirtation with Mr. Rubric temporarily suspended, the young ladies have on their hands plenty of time to devote to the pleasant occupation—"jolly" would perhaps be the most appropriate word—of getting in the holly and the mistletoe. Miss Bowers, in one of her characteristic sketches, which she calls "Gathering the Greenery," depicts the young ladies from the hall, the manor-house, or the rectory, we are not quite sure which, providing themselves with "Christmas" with which to decorate the rooms at home for the great festival that we are all looking forward to with so much expectancy. They have secured the assistance of the gardener, who knows no mercy in his ferocious attack upon the holly-tree which he is despoiling. He would cut down a whole forest if his young mistress were to give him the word. Miss Emmeline, standing there on the frozen ground, her arms full of greenery, her veil thrown carelessly back, thinking probably of somebody who will use every possible artifice to catch her "under the mistletoe"—this young lady, like Mr. Alexander Selkirk on the Desert Island, is "monarch of all she surveys," and she bids Thomas the gardener hew and hack at the holly-tree until that worthy vows "there ain't nor a mossel more on it," and seeks "fresh woods and pastures new" on which to try the merits of his huge knife. The young gentleman on the pony, which by the way either came from the Island of Shetland or the wilds of the New Forest, has a very hard time of it just now. His sister has well-nigh covered him with prickly holly, a large branch of which hangs over his shoulder; and his brother is about to place his load upon the young equestrian, whose "fiery steed" puts up with the extra work with equanimity. Perhaps he knows that it is Christmas-time, the season which furnishes festivity to everybody and everything except the poor birds, who will be glad enough when the trees are covered with leaves once more, and when they can sing their matin-songs without fear of being frozen to death.

THE CHRISTMAS MEET.

That which the boys and girls home for the holidays so thoroughly despise and contemn, and which we call a "green" Christmas, delights the heart of the fox-hunter, who sees in frost-bound lakes and snow-covered fields only "a let and hindrance" to his sport. For him the warm wind blowing from the south, the sky flecked with clouds, the weather "soft," and all signs of frost disappearing or altogether vanished. Give him such a day as this, and he is satisfied. He will ride to covert with as much delight as that which a young lady experiences on first going to Court; and in your "Bell" of the following week your eyes shall be regaled by a glowing account of the run from "the find" to "the finish." Yet there is something especially enlivening about a "Christmas meet," when the snow is on the meadows: the yelping of the hounds as they fly over the milk-white ground, leaving the dotted impress of their feet on the snowy surface; the sharp ring of the horses' hoofs cantering over the hard road; the glow on everybody's face, and on none more than on the blooming countenances of the horsewomen, some of whom have galloped three or four miles or more to the trysting-place; the hearty congratulations of old friends who, maybe, have not seen one another since last Christmas, when they met on the very same ground as that they are now upon; all this makes up a scene which it does one good to witness. The dexterous limner who in another picture shows us how the greenery is gathered, gives us a capital sketch of a Christmas meet, full of life and character, and exhilarating even to look at. Few artists of the present day draw hunting scenes better than Miss Bowers, who worthily takes the place vacated by the lamented John Leech. Her horses are flesh and blood; their riders are people you have seen before; there is a reality about her sketches that stamps her a true artist; and we shall be surprised if many of those who gather at the covert-side at this time of the year do not see many familiar faces in Miss Bowers's "Christmas Meet."



GATHERING THE GREENERY.—*BY. G. BOWERS.*

THE OLD LIFEBOAT OF ST. ERNE.

BY A. STEWART HARRISON.

"I'll e'en gie ye ten siller shillings for the wrack of her jist as she is, and I'll ne'er gie ye a pinch o' black rappee more, so ye may take or leave her jist as ye please, my captain."

"Ten shillings, man! The boat's worth twice as many pounds."

"Not now, captain—not now; ye'll ne'er try to persuade me that the ould thing lying there wi' half her ribs broken, and her plank ends started from the rivets, is worth the money ye say, and at least sax feet of her keel floating down with the tide many a good mile from here, to say naught of the stern being gone away altogether."

"I tell you she cost me £30 the week I left the London docks."

"That's as may be, captain; that's a matter for ye and the carl who built her, and methinks he'd like to put more of the same sort, at the same price, on *every* ship that leaves the dock; but I'm speaking of now, not then, and I'll gie ye the siller at once, or ye can let your boat's crew tow her behind, or lift her aboard, or do what ye will to get her aboard, where ye've no means of repair; to lumber your deck all your voyage round to the North."

"Well, you unconscionable old skinflint, make it a pound and it's settled."

"Nay, captain, ten siller shillings I'll gie ye, and not a bawbee more."

"I'd rather chop her up for firewood."

"An' ye will, captain, I'll chop her up for ye mysel, an' ye'll gie me a day's pay, o' folk hereabout, a matter of some four shilling or thereabout, and that'll be cheaper than letting your crew come ashore at the risk of losing another boat in the surf, or them altogether through the backdoor of the public-house yonder."

"Well, take her—take her, and may she drown you for your stinginess the first time you go in——"

"Nay, captain, she'll no drown me unless she's appointed to do it, and I'll ha' no fear of her at all when I've patched her up a little, so here's yer money, and good day to ye, captain."

After this fashion, some ten or twelve years ago, the village of St. Erne became possessed of what is at this moment called "The Old Lifeboat," and to look at her it does seem time that she should be called the "old," thereby indicating the existence of a new one. The old lifeboat is a portion only of a boat originally built for whaling purposes, with the entire stern part cut away at about a third of the length, and a new stern, consisting of a number of pieces of old drifted wood, of various thicknesses, nailed on in the rudest manner to the sides; and the whole thing pitched within and without with repeated coats till sufficiently tight to keep out water—that is her appearance now as she lies under a shed in the grounds of the Tregarven family. How she came there, why she is kept there, or who keeps her there, are parts of a story of St. Erne which every stray visitor to the place hears, with a great variety of detail, but, up to this time, with a tolerable adherence to the main points, before he has been a week in the place.

Donald Knox, the old Scotchman who was owner of the boat, occupied a cottage about half a mile from the main street of the village. The cottage was close to the shore, lying about the centre of a small bay to the south of the large bay of St. Erne, the spur of rocks forming the southernmost side of the large bay and the northernmost side of the small bay, ran out for nearly a mile at high water; and at low water the jagged points could be seen some half mile further still, so that the fishermen of the large bay always gave the spur, which they called the "Devil's Comb," a wide berth whenever there was either wind or sea, and as on that coast there was mostly one or the other, the old Scotchman had the small bay very much to himself. And there, from morning till night, the folks who walked on the cliff above could watch him as he patiently fished in all weather, in the ugly misshapen thing bought for ten shillings, and patched up with firewood. A keen fisherman, and a good salesman, old Donald was reported to be "comfortable," and though no alteration took place in his solitary mode of life from year to year, there was an independence and rude dignity about the man which indicated that he could afford to express his opinions on men and things with perfect freedom.

One year, say the year 185—, the autumn had been mild and the weather calm. Winter began as autumn ended, and it was not till the middle of December that the winds awoke, but then it was an awaking indeed. From the 15th to the 22nd there was one gale almost without a lull; the wind blew great guns all day and all night from the south-west for a week on end, and the sea as a result kept rising till the sound of the surf boomed through the air for miles inland, and men tasted salt on their lips in towns and villages where the sea was considered to be quite a journey away.

It was an awful week: trees, houses, haystacks, seemed to have lost weight and to have taken wings. On the 22nd the gale suddenly ceased, and a calm of deathlike stillness succeeded, and then, with gradually increasing violence, the gale rose again; the air felt solid, it could be leaned against as one leans against a wall; the drops of rain dashed like showers of shot against the windows, and beat down the small twigs till the trees were fingerless, and the ground covered with litter that swept in low dark clouds like a black snowstorm, till the sheltered places were piled with firewood, as if Nature meant to light the ruined trees with hundreds of bonfires. It was an awful day that 24th of December, in the year of our Lord 185—, and a more awful night.

"Dark as pitch," said one of the yellow-oilskin-coated fishermen, as he stood in the shelter of the net-tanning house at the end of the bay.

"Dark it is; couldn't well be darker. And it blows as hard as it's dark, and that's saying a great deal."

"That last warn't a blow, that was a gun, Jack."

"Gun be blowed."

"There! again, Jack. I tell you it *is* a gun."

"Nonsense, Michael, it's no gun; you couldn't hear a gun with this surf thundering on the beach and shaking the ground under us."

"*You* can't, Jack, my lad, because you're more used to the swish-swish, as she goes, than to the surf. I can. I've not listened to the surf, man and boy, on this beach for more than forty years without knowing the sound well enough to tell when a gun's fired. Look now—there's the flash just over the 'Devil's Comb.'"

"Right you are, Michael, right you are; and there's the sound now. She's close in shore."

"She is. She's right on the Comb; there's nothing can save her if she don't clear the point in the next ten minutes. If she's far enough out for that she'll do; if not, there'll be some pickings for Scottie when the sea goes down.

"Good evening, Michael. Did you hear the guns?"

"I did, Master Walter. There's a big ship, to judge by the flash—at least she carries big guns—just the other side of the Comb, and it's touch-and-go with her. Another ten minutes will settle it.

"Good God, man! What do you mean?"

"Mean, Master Walter? Why, she's got just ten minutes to clear the point of the Comb, and if she don't do it she'll go right ashore in the middle of it, with this wind and the set of the current."

"But why do you stand here? Can nothing be done? No light shown? No boat sent to them? It's most horrible to think of!"

"Boat, Master Walter? Look down there—see that curler, that's two men's height from the shore, and the sand dry under it. Listen, now—hear that! Why, that would swamp the biggest boat that ever pulled oar. No, there's no boat can live to-night on this coast. There, again, there's the flash and the gun."

By this time the crowd of idlers had increased, and all could hear the gun and see the flash.

"She's gone, Master Walter. She's a doomed ship. That flash is three cables' length more in shore than the last. She's gone. In less than half-an-hour she's in pieces as big as matchwood, and old Donald will have his winter's firing ready cut to his hand."

"Do you say it will be half-an-hour before she strikes?"

"I do. Ten minutes ago she'd a chance, now she's none, and they know it, too. There's two guns. She knows where she is now. Big ship—I could see the tops of her masts over the Comb in the flash."

"Where do you say she'll strike?"

"That depends. If the captain's a fool he'll refuse to see he's lost, and will keep trying still to keep her off that point; if he's a wise man he'll push her up the bay as far as he can into shoal water to save his crew."

"And nothing can be done?"

"Nothing, Master Walter, unless the minister there, Mr. Pollanck, can say a prayer for them all; they'll need it."

"I tell you what it is, Michael," said Jack. "I shall go through the gap in Donald's Bay, and see if something can't be done. Some poor devil may wash ashore within reach, and get saved that way."

"I'll go too, my man; give me one minute to send a message to the house."

"O, for that matter, Master Walter, I'm with you—and it can't do any harm, though I'm sure it can't do any good."

The party, joined by others, soon started for the gap in the spur that led to old Donald's cottage; they were just entering the dark cutting between the rocks, when Jack's arm was pulled.

"What now? Why Kathleen, what brings you here? Go back, lass, go back."

"So I will, Jack, darlint, only I've brought ye the belt out of the locker that they sent down from the quarters to keep ye from drowning. O, Jack, it's the government people that sent it, and they sent the order that none of their guard are to go in bad weather without it, darlint."

"Government be blowed, Katty, I can't wear the thing, looking as if I'd put all my books in a bag, and tied it round me; take it back to your father, darling, and tell him I don't want it."

"O, Jack, if you're going on the say without it you'll kill me intirely. Take it, me darlint, the government wouldn't have sent it if it hadn't been good to wear."

"It's no manner of use, Katty—you're hindering us."

"Well then, darlint, I'll carry it all the way to old Donald's myself, if ye will only promise me to put it round ye, if ye go on the say—think it's me arms, darlint, and it won't be in the way-sure-thin, darlint."

Jack's reply was rather smothered by something, and laden with the new coast-guard life belt he joined the others on their difficult march against the wind.

Just as they came through the gap and got a full view of the small bay they saw the vessel by the aid of the blue lights she was burning, which flared up for one moment, and then by the force of the wind were nearly extinguished.

"The captain is no fool, he has cut away all his canvas except the top sail and jib, and he's letting her drive right up the bay. He won't clear the comb though, he'll strike about a furlong up from the low water beach, and she'll go to pieces in a quarter of an hour."

"Is that Donald's cottage?"

"That's my cottage, Master Tregarven," said a voice out of the darkness; "that's old Donald's cottage. Ah me! It's a doleful sight to see that fine ship and all her crew dashed to pieces on those rocks, Master Walter, ah me! a doleful sight, but it's appointed for them, and there's na help for it. Now if we'd one of those craft that they call their life boats in London, that can turn over and right theirselves, and empty theirselves when they're full, and pull some sixteen oars, we could do something for her."

"Do, man—do—it makes me sick to stand here and see it. Are we men or old women? Can't we take a boat from here—this creek where the surf's only breast high and get a line to them? If it only save one life it will be something.

"I don't know about old women, Master Walter, but if there's a tub anywhere about that'll float, I'm one to pull an oar in her, if there's another willing."

"Willing, Jack?—I'm ready now."

"Don't be madmen. It can't be done—there's not a boat on the coast I tell you 'll live in this sea."

"I'm na sa sure of that, Michael—I've got—"

"O, lor, lads, hearken to this. Here's Donald going to brag that old tub of his that's not fit to wash potatoes in, much less to risk men's lives."

"Can't be done," "Old tub," "Blind fools," "Mad," were the murmurs heard by the two men who had offered to go. Nothing daunted, however, they asked the whereabouts of the boat.

"The boat's just in her place now, master, out of harm's way, and I'll e'en join her mysel', as I know the ways of the creature a bit better than ye do perhaps, only—"

"Well man, only what?"

"Well, if onything happens to the boat ye know, and its a dangerous service, who's to be at the expense of righting her, d'ye see?—Now I thought if ye'd all say ye'd be a siller shilling apiece for the boat in case she's hurt, I'll gie her up to ye."

"Shame! Shame! mean old man, when a fellow-creature's life's in danger to naggle about an old boat," said the crowd.

"What for? Shame! What shall I do when the boat's gone? Shall I get fish in my hat? What shame? Why suld I risk my ten siller shillngs and ye shouting loons nothing. There's my shilling to any man's boat, and I'll gang mysel' in any man's boat."

"All right, Donald—you're quite right. I'll give you the best boat on the coast if we can save one life out of that ship, and my word's my bond."

"Yes it is, sir, and your father's, too; ye shall have the boat and welcome—come on, this way."

"Well, well, and you will be such fools as to go—I shan't shirk it. I suppose some one 'll look arter my old woman at home if I do go—so go on, lads."

The old boat was brought out of its shed, and furnished with a pair of oars evidently cut from some sapling of the adjoining wood; a spare one for Michael and a coil of rope for Walter Tregarven completed the equipment.

"Jack, darlint, ye've not got the belt on," said a breathless voice, "and ye told me—ye did—"

"There, lass there,—not a word more; it's on now, and don't feel half as bad as I thought—get back, there's a good girl."

"Now then, lads, are ye ready? Jack, you pull with me, and I'll keep ye steady, and you, Michael, pull forward o' us. Now, lads, watch this curler—steady—now then, away with her—away with her!"

The fishermen ran out the boat on a receding wave till they were up to their necks, and shoved her off.

It was a fearful moment as the next roller came in to see the cockle-shell, with four good men's lives held in her frail sides, rise like a rocket on the wave, and then plunge down apparently filled with water.

"Sit ye close, sit ye close, Master Walter, sit low and close, she'll not take in much more—pull now, lads—a short, quick stroke, and wait for the rise, sit low, all sit low, so now—steady." Another pull and then they were free of the surf and in the waves themselves.

The ship had meanwhile been driven nearer and nearer the rocks, and by the blue light those in the boat could see the crew and passengers, waiting patiently for the end. The sea had evidently swept away the whole of her bulwarks; here and there clinging to a stump could be seen some recumbent figures, while the whole of the wreck of the mainmast and its gear encumbered the deck.

On the poop stood the captain, holding on by the mizen shrouds, while four men stood to the wheel, struggling even to the last to keep some control over the fate of the vessel.

Standing on the leeward side of the ship, where the shrouds had sustained the last remaining portion of the upper works, and clinging to the shrouds, were an old white-headed man and his daughter.

"A bad end, Ethel, for our long voyage, to die on the very shore of home."

"Bad indeed, father! but we die as we have lived, together. There is no hope?"

"None, child, none, in less than five minutes the end must come."

"How quiet they all seem! I thought there would be screaming and groans—they are as calm as you and I."

"Yes, it's the suddenness of any risk that makes men fear and show their fear in that way. We have known for half an hour or more there was no hope: and we are calm, and, as I have you with me, not unhappy."

"I scarcely know what I feel; it is not fear, not quite regret, but a dreadful dull suspense, as if even hope would be positively painful."

"Hope—hope! My child—did my eyes deceive me! is that—my God! it cannot be a boat?"

"It is, father, it is. I see it now on the side of the wave with four men."

"Great heaven, from where?—is it help that is coming? It is gone—I could not be mistaken. They hail us. Captain, captain! There is a boat!"

"He does not hear, can you cross the deck, father, to make him hear?"

The old man left, and endeavoured to cross the deck; meanwhile the boat had reached the vessel within about twenty yards.

"Steady, Master Walter—steady, now wait till I lay her a little nearer—watch her."

"There's no one to take the line but a girl."

"It's their last chance—we shall never get near her again. Hail them."

"It's useless, the voice is lost."

"Hail the woman."

"Ship ahoy!—She sees us. Look out for the line—she waves her hand and holds it up. Bring her head round—back water, Michael—pull, Jack, pull—now for it."

The line coiled in the right hand of Walter, flew forward, shot the remainder of the coil from his left and fell on the shoulders and raised arm of Ethel, and then slowly and like a retreating snake began to fall back again to the sea—but for one moment—in the next it was firmly twisted several times round her arm, and the next the cold damp line grew red hot, as a wave carried boat and men past the side of the vessel, tearing the line at a terrible speed through her hand, round the turns on her arm. A single movement of the arm and the rope would drop—lost for ever. A pang of frightful agony as the rope cut deeper and deeper into the flesh, and still she held on. A shriek that pierced the ear through the noise of the wind brought some of the crew to her side and the line was untwisted from her arm and made fast to the shrouds, while another and thicker line was hove to the men in the boat and made fast by them.

The captain now came across the deck and hailed them through the trumpet.

"Where are we? How soon shall we strike?"

They could hear his voice aided by the trumpet, in the boat, but were unable to make themselves heard in answer.

"Some of us must get aboard of her."

"I'll go—tell me what to do, Michael."

"Get them to fire again and watch the flash. You'll see two big rocks with an opening between them. Let her drive right into that, and if she'll hold together till daybreak we can get them ashore on a hawser. Make fast the end of one of the braces to the line they've hove us, and we'll take it ashore to haul the hawser in with."

"I'll go, but you must take the girl off in my place."

"You must be quick, Master Walter, they're not five minutes from the Comb now."

"How shall I get her in the boat?"

"Lower her from the fore-yard-arm, and drop her when we bring the boat under."

Carefully watching his opportunity, Walter sprang into a part of the overhanging rigging as the boat neared the ship on the top of a wave, and in a few seconds stood on the deck.

"Fire a gun, captain, and let her drive into the opening of two rocks you'll see by the flash. Send a stout line into the boat to haul a hawser on shore; and some of you fellows help me to get this girl into the boat from the fore-yard-arm. She's saved you all if you're saved at all."

Almost helpless from pain and exhaustion Ethel was made fast to a line, the other end of which was held in the hands of the now hopeful seamen.

"You give your life for mine, sir!"

"If so, I give it most willingly. I trust it may not be given for all their sakes."

The boat darted underneath the yard-arm, and Ethel for a moment wildly tossing in the air, was the next in the arms of Michael in the boat; and with a parting cheer from the crew the boat headed for the shore.

A few brief moments and the captain's voice was heard through the trumpet.

"Hold on all—hold on for your lives—she strikes!"

There was a crash of timbers, a frenzied yell, and then the masts tottered, swayed, fell, and the ship was fast on the rocks. The waves tried in vain to lift her from the jaws in which she was fixed; she trembled at the attack; large masses of rigging and spars swept over her deck, but she was fixed as the rock on which she lay. And there—lashed to anything that was standing—they waited in darkness and silence for Death or help! Each moment lent fresh horror to the scene. Now a husband would be torn by the rush of water from the side of the wife, whose lashings he was trying to make more secure. Now some floating spar would sweep away like a battering ram the last frail support to which some of the poor creatures had clung for safety. But, spite of all, the framework stood fast and immovable.

Dimly a grey rift appeared in the east—increased, then slowly reddened, and as the light grew, so grew hope. The wind dropped as the first gleam of sun shot across the foaming sea, and then those gazing at the shore said there were signals made to them.

The hawser was slowly passed over the side as those on shore hauled it in, and then the end was carried up the tall stump of the mizen-mast and made fast, and in a few minutes there was a path to the shore.

Such a path! A rope some two hundred yards long, and as thick as a woman's wrist!

"Who will take a line ashore for the cradle?" called the captain.

Half a dozen volunteered, and then might be seen what pluck and training could do.

A sailor stripped to the waist, with a small line made fast round him, climbed the mast, swung off, and hung under the line by his hands and feet. Foot by foot they watched him go down the curve and nearer the water, and then they lost him as the waves dashed over him; and when they passed he was still moving on with a slow, steady swing from side to side, and then, before the next wave came, they saw a line of men hand in hand rush on the heels of a retiring wave, and seize the man and bear him ashore; then a shout that silenced the elements for an instant reached the ship.

They were saved!

A cradle was rigged and run backwards and forwards on the hawser by a snatch block, till all had gone; the children, the women, and the wounded first—all had gone but three: the captain, the colonel, and Walter Tregarven, who stood for a moment, almost disputing as to who should be the first to leave.

"You must go, colonel; you must, indeed—you're an older man than I, and your daughter is there."

"I cannot, sir—I should never forgive myself if anything happened to you. You've saved us all, and must go first."

"Let me complete the saving, and I will go."

"Pray go, colonel. I must, as captain, be the last man on my ship's deck, and while you dispute she may drop to pieces. Pray go at once."

And so it came to pass that Walter Tregarven was the last to leave the ship save one, who, leaving her, left all he had loved for years a prey to the wave's fury.

Not a moment too soon. The captain had hardly reached the shore when the mast broke off short at the deck and fell over the side, and the hawser was snapt like a packthread by the rush of a sea which parted the strained timbers and left in the place of the ship nothing but a jostling heap of fragments. And then they counted in the dull, cold morning light, and found that out of three score and three souls that the day before had seen the sun there were more than half who would see it no more.

That Christmas-day the old halls of Tregarven were filled with strange groups; but there were clothes, food, and medicine for all, and there was scarcely a dry eye in the little village church when the Thanksgiving for "those who now desire to offer up their prayers and thanksgivings for the late mercies vouchsafed to them" was read by the minister in the hearing of those who were saved.

* * * * * *

There is little more to add.

There is one of the best modern lifeboats now in each of the bays. Michael is coxswain of one and old Donald of the other. One is called "The Ethel," the other "The Walter."

There is one more fact that may be interesting to some.

Mrs. Walter Tregarven never wears short sleeves save once a year, and that on Christmas-day, and then may be seen a strange, curling, pale, red mark that twines round her right arm from the elbow to the wrist, and loses itself in the palm of the hand, as if she held the head of a snake.

And that day is one of the days when all the family, and not a few of the village folk, make a sort of pilgrimage to the shed under which lies the "Old Lifeboat of St. Erne."

ROBIN REDBREAST IN HARBORNE CHURCH.

BY ELIHU BURRITT.

John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit descending and alighting upon our Saviour in the form of a dove. Every other visible manifestation to mankind of the other two persons of the Godhead had been in a human form. As our Saviour conferred the greatest dignity upon our humanity it ever attained by taking it upon Him and dying in it, so the Holy Spirit, in descending upon Him in the shape and nature of a dove, gave a meaning and ministry to birds of a gentle and happy wing which associates them with spiritual beings and missions. In northern climes and skies, they tell us when the frosty Spirit of Winter is about to breathe forth its frozen breath of snow and hail and biting winds. And, in fleeing southward from it with hasty wings and warning voices, they bid us prepare for the white visitation of the winter months with their snow and ice. Again they return with their happy breasts bright and warm with the sun of coming Spring, and sing to us over its advent virtually the same song the angels sang over the birth of the infant Saviour. For surely every devout and grateful heart ought to translate their spring notes into "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and goodwill to men!" These sweet-voiced birds symbolise the brightest immortalities that the human soul aspires to or dreams of. It prays, and hopes, and yearns to go back to the Father of Spirits on the wings of a dove; to fly, to soar upwards to a heavenly home above the stars; to be taken into its portal by that Father tenderly and lovingly, as the old world's dove was taken into the Ark by Noah, the father of all the saved from the Flood. Therefore, these birds of symbolising song and pinion should be held in tender and loving association by all who think in their meditations or talk in their prayers about the wings of faith, the spirit's flight, and soaring hope.

One of these sweet songsters came into our village church the other Sunday and assisted at the morning service. Week after week the dank and lowering heavens had drooped earthward with heavy burdens of darkness, wind, and rain. Few gleams of blue sky had been seen through the leaden-looking clouds. But on this still Sabbath morning, just as Robin Redbreast darted from his perch on the east window down upon the altar-rail, the sun burst out and flooded all the pews, arches, and aisles with its brightest Christmas shinings. The little bird seemed to bring it, so simultaneous was their visitation. Its breast was all aglow with it, and it seemed conscious of it, like a celestial spirit sent forward to tell us the sun was coming to pay a morning visit to the house of prayer and praise. It darted up and down, here and there, and trotted over the communion table, perched on the pulpit, ran along the holly-decked cornices and arches, all the while confining its flights and skips to the chancel, as one that had a right and duty to take part in the "Te Deum" of the choir. When that most glorious of devotional songs arose, it perched upon the candelabra close by the singers, and listened with seeming delight, now turning its ear this side, then that, as they answered each other in the song from opposite seats. When the minister descended from his seat at the altar to read the "First Lesson" at the lectern, Robin dropped down from his perch overhead, and trotted along before the man in surplice all the way across the altar enclosure, down the steps to the reading-stand in the transept; just as much at home and decorous in the duty as if he had been the appointed verger or beadle of the church.

It was a happy, beautiful coincidence; full of pleasant suggestion and association. It could only have happened in England; for no other northern land is so blessed with the winter companionship of summer birds. This perennial songster had not come into the church that Sunday morning to peck at the holly berries that were strung like red beads in the laurel and holly wreaths that decorated the pillars and arches for the joy of Christmas. I did not see it dip its bill into a single berry or leaf or seedy petal. It had come into the house of worship with no such appetite, but seemingly with the same motive that brought the rest of the worshippers. Its flights from arch to arch, and its little trots on the altar-rails, and skippings to and fro, made no unseemly mirth or flutter among the children. Their eyes filled with the light of a new interest, and smiles they were not aware of bloomed from their faces; but not an audible murmur or whisper was heard in the congregation. Indeed, the youngest boys and girls made no more noise than the little worshipper that came in with sunny wings and shining breast to the morning service in the house of God to hear the human singers of His praise sing what it had sung in another tongue and another temple from the moment a common Heavenly Father first gave it a voice and heart to sing.

SNOWBALLING!

BY EDWARD LEGGE.

(See the Picture.)

Snow on the ground at last! Hurrah for Christmas-time!
Home for the holidays, nothing to do!
No one to bother us—only ourselves to please!
Free to go now where we list, high or low!
What are the girls about? Send them downstairs, mama;
Tell them to come to the back of the hall.
We shall be three and three, ready for snowballing—
Round by the park we can hear when you call.

Over the frozen path swiftly we run along—
Past the old churchyard we merrily go—
Singing a verse of a carol or something else,
Heedless of all but the frost and the snow!
Ha! here they come at last—Hetty and Mirabel,
Little May trotting as blithe as can be.
Down with your muffs, my girls—come along, Raymond lad;
Who'll win the snow-fight you'll presently see.

Stand in a line, you three! Ha! that was one to us!
You shall have Willy, as sister won't play.
We two can conquer; we've made up our minds to win—
Don't throw at Mirabel—shy one at May!
Hetty, look out, or you'll get such a hard one, dear;
There! Master Will, that will satisfy *you!*
Mirabel, darling, why don't you come in the game,
Not stand there freezing, with nose and ears blue?

* * * * * *

Reader! would *you* require asking a second time—
Asking, I mean, to take part in the game,
If your companions were these three fair English girls—
Mirabel, Hetty, and May De la Græme?
Mirabel, standing so still in the snowy path,
Has but one secret she cares not to tell;
Happy the man who has gained for himself the prize—
Golden-hair'd, beautiful, dear Mirabel!

BEACONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY BLANCHARD JERROLD.

The green silk curtain at the porch is parted by the traveller's timid hand, and he passes out of the blaze of the sun into the cool and quiet of the House of the Lord. He has just been pelted with luscious figs by a *gaillarde* of a market woman. He has been musing over the Italian maidens at their spinning wheels, and hastening back through the centuries, to the days when the Royal maidens of Greece spun from the distaff held under their lovely arms, just as these bright, soft, and queenly Italian peasant girls are twisting the threads with which their marriage portion shall be woven. The sunlight embraces everything, as a king's smile lights a Court. Within the House of the Lord, gently, and with the outer warmth tingling in their veins and upon their cheeks, the Italian matrons and maids move their reverent lips, and click their fans that flash back the holy light pranked with the wealthy colours of the windows. The traveller from the north is bathed in the delightful atmosphere, and yearns to yield to "the siesta of the soul" which the place invites.

Happy Italy! is the song that seems to dance from perch to perch in the cage of his brain, as the German poet and wit come from places where "the sun wears a flannel waistcoat" (the reader has recognised Henri Heine by this time), takes his first sweet bath of the sunny South, and dallies outside the church, with the ruddy Italian babe cooing in its swaddling clothes, under the deep unbroken blue, amid the fresh almonds, figs, oranges, and lemons, over which its buxom mother is presiding, with a passionate pleasure in her royal air.

Happy Italy!—happier than where, to compensate for the dryness of the lemons, modern Norsemen are compelled to make their punch with a little extra rum. In the market-woman's abundant tresses there are flowers of her sun-kissed native fields. Her voice is the music of happiness. Her neighbours pass out of the cool church, musically as a stream ripples through the underwood in a grove; and the baby answers the vesper bell with its rattle amidst its mother's luscious stock-in-trade.

And does sorrow pass this way?

"Sorrow," the German traveller exclaims, still watching in the sunny market-place, "thy name is Cotton!"

He has been entranced with the voluptuous, airy, and noble faces of the happy crowd that has passed before him. In every limb and attitude there is, to his contemplative and sensitive mind, a poetry that glows, and seems to enwrap the land. But presently, when his sight is accustomed to the sun, and his sense is familiar with the all-pervading grace, he becomes calm—a happy critic pondering a poem. Then he finds the sadness under the glow—the shadow of the sunny life. The riches are the leavings of the past; the poverty is everywhere, and of the present, and is further darkened with the pride and the wealth of old. The matrons and maidens are proud as when all the silks and velvets which show the cord, were new. They have still scraps of the great old time to deck their opulent beauty on Sundays; but they are passing to the cheap, tawdry finery of this later day. The proud air, and the beggar's cotton; the paper flowers dancing over a mouth and eye of imperial command; the swell and beauty of a duchess wrapped in false lace; the royal gait in calico attire!

"Sorrow!" the watchful poet repeats, "thy name is cotton!" And as the poet saw cotton, it was so; for it was the cheap cheat of pride. He found all the happiness and splendour on the surface of his first Italian city, and drank of it without thinking, or troubling, lest he should mar his dream. But when within his *locanda*, and after his "*bon pranzo*," he leisurely probed his way to a just estimate of the glory which had bewitched his sight; and had made his own country that ripens only the fruit to which the frost gives mellowness* seem unhappy, and of sinister aspect; he saw that this life was one, the brightness of which was, chiefly, upon the surface.

There are two existences. The nations of the South have the sun upon them, and bask in it, and live in it: the nations of the north get their warmth at home. Their dark side lies towards the street. The feather in the wing of the goose is the clumsiest and slowest of ornithological travellers: pluck it, and feed it with ink instead of goose-blood, and it may be matched with the flashing pinions of the electrical messenger. I dip my quill in the black tide, and it bears me from under the blue of Italy, to the grey canopy that is spread on a land which is darkened in its outer case, but glows vividly as the eye of Agrippina, from within.

I have had a fancy about our Black Country, and have called it Italy—turned inside out. Sweep over its sable surface, specked with sooty honey-combs. As you pass you are stirred indistinctly with the deep hum of its mighty movements; and, a stranger, you wonder, like the child with a shell at its ear, that believes it catches the voice of Neptune, and yet disbelieves, but knows that it is a strange sound. You must lift the veil, to see the beauty. Wherever there is an opening in the curtain there are white flashes of light. Umber-tinted figures move in the darkness under the grey heavens: but from the fires within they are outlined with ilghts as bright as any that ripple along the painted windows of Italian cathedrals. Seen by the fire-light that is at the hearth of the sable land, the housewife in the cot glows in a beauty all her own; and the market-place under the grey heavens has not much to envy the sunny square in which the babe lies cooing among the luscious figs. Scratch the Black Country, and the light comes; lift the thinnest Italian curtains, and you approach darkness. It should be no small comfort to think in this direction, when the snow lies thick, when the rain patters heavily, when the fog thickens through the work-a-day streets.

The beacon lights that command Italian valleys, are the snow-capped peaks kissed by the moon. These frosted sentinels, mailed, immoveable, in their silent hardness bear witness to the proud and poor Italian child humming in his laurel bowers of the dead Past that will not bury its dead, and is a perpetual reproach to the degenerate Present. The beacon-lights that jewelled our land in the olden days were the poetic messages of war. There was blood in the tints of the flame. But the flames that glow out of the black hives—the ebon ant-hills—of our sombre land, are the messengers of men as courageous as those who fired the mountain tops when the dogs of war were loose; but gentler and happier. In the sparks that feather through the smoke, we may catch fancies as pleasant as those which the Italian wakes with his guitar, under the balcony of the traveller. Head and heart speak with every throb of the engine, every blow of the hammer; and daintier plumes never floated over the queens of the sunny South, than those with which steam crowns in a hundred places, the genius of industry.

Walter Savage Landor has said: "We fancy that all our afflictions are sent us directly from above; sometimes we think it in piety and contrition, but oftener in moroseness and discontent. It would be well, however, if we attempted to trace the causes of them; we should probably find their origin in some region of the heart, which we never had well explored, or in which we had secretly deposited our worst indulgences The clouds that intercept the heavens from us come not from the heavens, but from the earth."

Both in radiant Italy, and in the Black Country, the darkness is from the soil. But the advantage incontestibly lies with us—juicy as the sun-kissed figs are, and sweet to the tooth as the green almond must be, and happy as the child is answering the Angelus with its rattle. For our darkness has the vivifying and ennobling light of industry within it. Our blackness is carbon, of which we make the diamond. The Italians, whom Heine beheld with rapture, coked the brilliants. The rain that falls to us we send back, sublimated by genius and holy courage, into steam. And thus we turn the clouds to fine uses, that, passing over idle heads, are sorrows.

"MERRY CHRISTMAS."

There is no other language, and no other people that do not speak our own, that has such another word as *merry*, with all the meaning which we give it. The whole of that meaning is never brought out fully except when the word is put thus: "Merry Christmas." Then you have it in all its glory. Then you have it with all its ages of music, like the harp voices of a thousand years melting into each other, and making the very spaces of silence between melodious with the passing whisper of the strings. We sometimes venture to wonder if the angels, who, in the still blue night, sang to the listening shepherds the first Christmas carol the earth ever heard, were gifted to know that the tune they pitched among the golden stars would be so sung all round the globe, in all human tongues, in these later days. One morning, about a week ago, the late-rising sun looked into the snow-bound cottages of Sitka, at the cold extreme of the American Continent. Its first rays awoke the prattling children in their half-buried homes, and, springing from their bear-skin cribs, they shouted in their rude speech the "Merry Christmas" which the sun was to carry around the earth to the awakening continents. An hour afterwards it opened the eyes of a population in the midst of Siberia, and "A Merry Christmas" was their first greeting of its beams. On it went, from continent to continent, from island to island, and all their joy bells and their happiest voices filled their homes with the music of the day.—*Elihu Burritt.*

THE AVENGER.

A LEGEND OF DUDLEY CASTLE.

BY J. C. TILDESLEY.

> "Water went ronde it, to guard it from the fooe;
> Fire shall burn it, and laye its towers low."
> —*Old Couplet.*

PART I.

The year 1750 was not many moons old, and the festivities at the ancient castle of the Dudleys, which began at Yule-tide, had not yet been brought to a close. Never was Baron more generous, or guests more merry, than Baron Ward of Dudley and the charmed circle whom it was his delight to honour. A feast-day at the Castle was an event to be experienced once and remembered for ever. The ivy-covered gateway opened its massive doors to the roll of chariot wheels and the clatter of prancing steeds; beacon lights flashed from the stately towers, and the spacious courtyard shone with the glitter of a thousand lamps. Fosse and rampart were guarded by minstrel bands, who played sweet welcome to the coming guests; and through the countless casements of the Castle stole gleams of light and echoes of mirth which told of the joyous scene within. To depict that scene would require a painter's skill. Long corridors of light, with guest-chambers on either side; a spacious kitchen on whose hearth crackled the dainties of the feast; a servants' hall where wandering pilgrims in distress were cheered and made merry "in honour of the day;" and the great hall where the Baron and his guests were met in festive glee. This great hall was something marvellous to behold, Four-score feet long, by nearly two-score feet wide; a lofty groined roof; a gallery filled with old Welsh harpers and other pilgrim minstrels, at the east end; sconces of shining brass supporting lights from the ceiling; and, on either side, a row of large and lofty Gothic windows of painted glass. Down the centre of this noble chamber was the festive board, groaning with good cheer; and on high-backed chairs of black oak were seated a goodly company of fair women and brave men.

Amid such a scene my story opens. The genial Baron welcomed that night at his table the beauty and the chivalry of the shire. Fairest of the fair, seated at the host's right hand, was Lady Fanny, an orphan of "sweet seventeen," and a ward under the Baron's charge. Not least brave among the knights was young Sir Edmund, the affianced cousin of this queenly maiden. Many a tender glance from her blue eyes cast Lady Fanny on Sir Edmund, and unobserved by the rest the good knight ogled his courtesies in exchange. Least of all was this amorous telegraphy seen by the worthy Baron, for the father of the young knight and he were sworn foes, and this scion was there rather on sufferance than as a specially-invited guest, for it was an axiom of the Baron's "never to desert a friend and never to forgive a foe."

The feast being over, the harpers struck up the good old tune of "Roger de Coverley" and the guests began to "chase the glowing hours with flying feet." Lady Fanny and Sir Edmund in many a delicious whirl fanned love's ardent flame, and in many a secret whisper plighted vow for vow. Yet withal did Lady Fanny carefully elude the watchful eye of the Baron in her love-making, for right well she knew his antipathy to Sir Edmund.

"The best of friends must part, my Lady Fanny," observed the poet Shenstone, who was among the guests, "and so farewell." The poet glanced slyly as he spoke towards Sir Edmund, but Lady Fanny affected not to notice the allusion, though she could scarce restrain a modest blush. The Baron was standing near, and the incident did not pass unobserved by him. Just then Sir Edmund, heedless of the Baron's glance, bade farewell to his lady love, with more affection than mere courtesy demanded, and the latter, with the airy spirit of a child, went skipping along the corridor humming an old ballad, with the refrain—

"Here is my true love, and happy will I be,
For I know that my true love will be true to me."

The voice of the Baron recalled her.

"Fanny, love," he said, in a tone more serious than was his wont, "prithee be not so wanting in courtesy as to retire without your guardian's blessing."

"Nay, dear my lord, I meant not such discourtesy," she rejoined, "and should have returned to have your benison after that I had seen from my chamber window the guests depart."

"Then pardon me, fair girl," the Baron said; "go, give thy peace to speed the parting guests and then come hither, for I would have a word with thee."

Lady Fanny from her chamber window watched the chariots and the horses pass under the old gateway bearing the evening's guests. To more than one she waved a greeting, but to one—Sir Edmund—she gave full measure of her loving courtesy, and then, closing the window, she retired to obey the Baron's summons. She found him in his library, engaged in earnest talk with young Lord Mildred, and was retiring in haste as fearing to intrude, when the Baron re-assured her, and she went in.

* * * * * *

What words were said in that courtly chamber; what tears and protestations were spent in vain; what honeyed promises, what stern threats were uttered, none may ever know. This much is known, that Lady Fanny retired at the grey dawn to her chamber in a fever of perplexity, and amid conflicting hopes and fears she wept herself to sleep.

PART II.

Hell-lane, a straggling village under Sedgley Beacon, was at the time of my story a place of marvel and mystery. It was the reputed abode of witches and wizards, thieves and highwaymen, and few dare venture down its long irregular street after nightfall. There was Kat Rhodes, and Trilley Riley, and Billy Moore, all noted brigands, of whom men stood in fear; but most of all was held in dread one Nelly Nicholls, a noted witch, was believed to assume the form of

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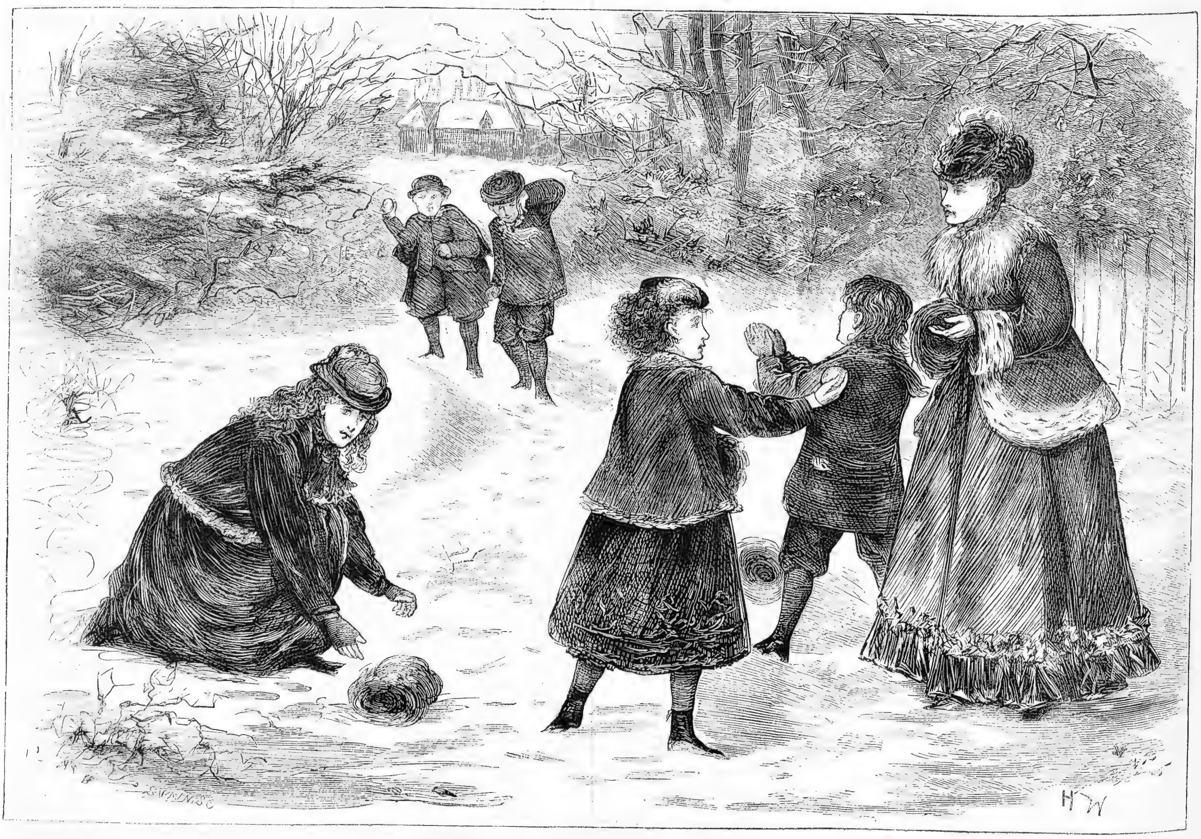
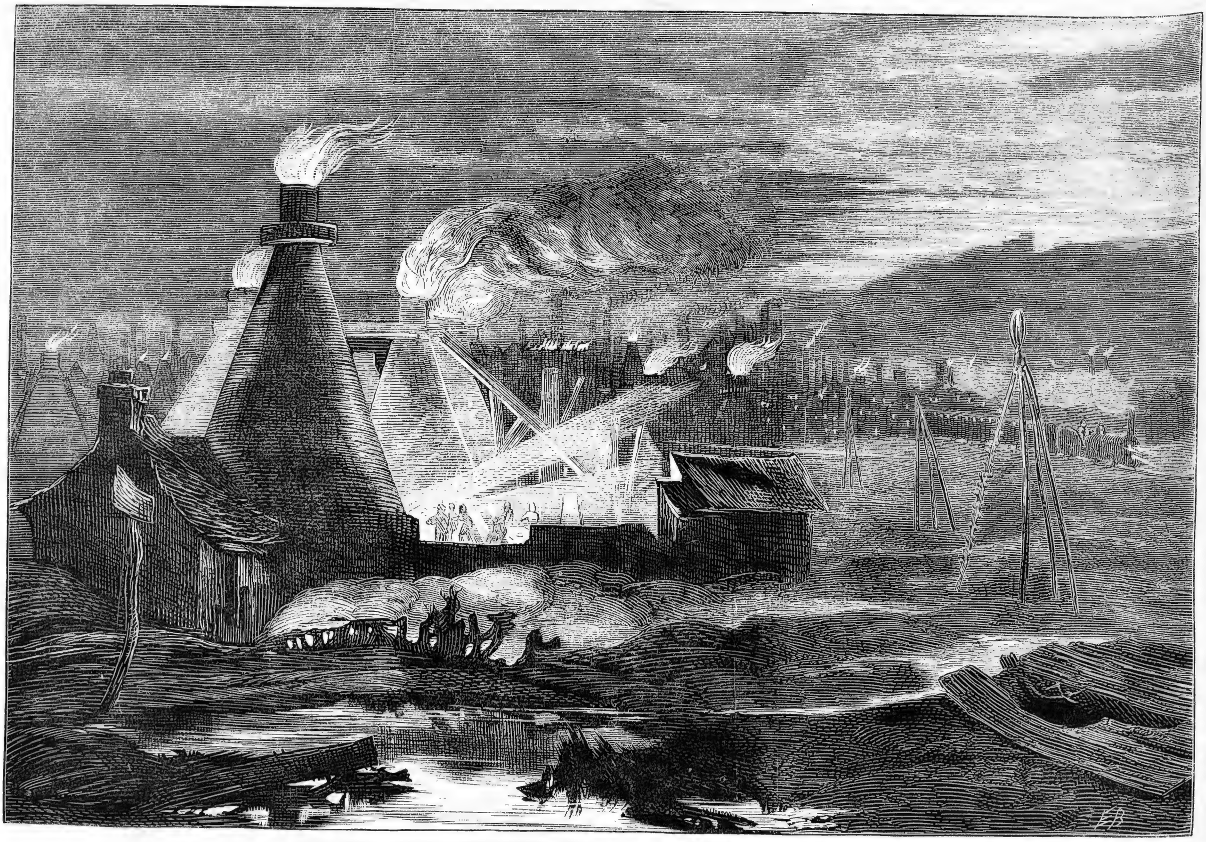
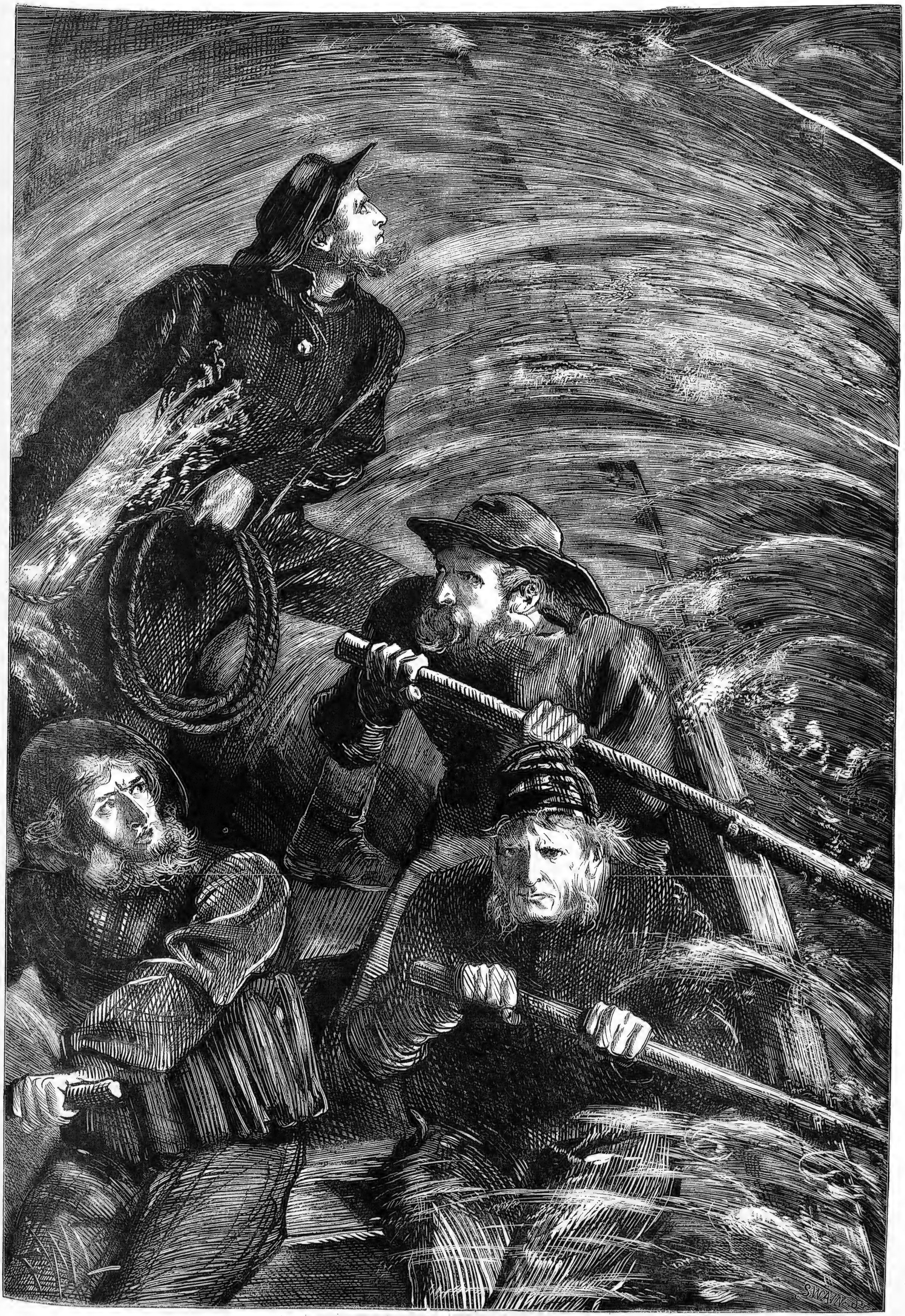
* The medlar.



SNOWBALLING.—*BY H. WOODS.* *(See the Verses.)*



BEACONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—*BY E. BUCKMAN.* *(See page 271.)*



THE OLD LIFEBOAT.—BY F. W. LAWSON. *(See the Story.)*

a white rabbit on dark winter evenings, to the terror of every villager. A few months after the party at Dudley Castle referred to above, a stranger strode at midnight up Hell-lane, and rapped at the low-browed cottage of Nelly Nicholls. There was a light in the window, and a ready opening of the door, which indicated that a guest was expected at that late hour. The stranger was wrapped in a rough cloak of woollen, and on his head he wore a black cap of shining bearskin, but when divested of these garments he had the appearance of being "a gentleman born." On crossing the threshold of the cottage door he greeted the only inmate with—

"Good even to you, Nelly, and luck to our venture!"

"Aye, aye, good sir," croaked in reply a miserable, bony-featured crone, clad in a scarlet cloak and black hood, "and that's well said for you, poor hapless wight; but what say the stars?"

"True, mother witch, well said; and what say the stars?" rejoined the stranger, half smiling.

The old crone, with a sly leer, reached down a smoke-dried and well-thumbed astrologer's chart, and after divers significant nods and murmurs, whined in mournful metre—

"The star of love arises,
But a cloud o'erspreads its glow;
And Charles's wain doth symbol pain,
And blood, red blood, shall flow."

"You heard o' the wedding, mother witch?" asked the stranger, after a pause, "and how pale and scared looked the child-bride?"

"Aye, aye, good sir," answered the crone, "and ill-luck to the bridegroom, be he a lord or no, for foiling thee o' sick a sweet ladye-love; but tell me, sir, was na' she to blame aweel?"

"On that score I would be silent, mother witch," said the stranger; "but ye know well enow what a rich lord can do wi' a wee bit lassie against a puir raw laddie like mysel'; besides which, a good old guardian like the Baron wielded strange power o'er the little lady Fanny, as I can well aver, but of this anon. Where are your henchmen, mother witch?"

"Near enow, at Trilly Riley's, by the bridge," replied Nelly, "but at the noon o' night they pledged themselves attendance here."

"'Tis now past one by Bilston church," said the stranger, looking at his massive silver watch.

He had scarce spoken before a rattling at the door proclaimed the expected arrival, and Kat Rhodes, Sammon Harry, and Devil Lees, three notorious denizens of Hell Lane, made their appearance. The stranger bowed to each as they entered, and Nelly, who had between her lips a dirty pipe, gave each a whiff of welcome. The stranger, with knit brows and clenched fist, stood in front of the rude hearth on which the flame was flickering to its death, and eyed intently the new comers.

"Hail fellows, well met," he said after a pause," I take you for true men."

"As true as the sunshine, mister," replied Kat Rhodes, whose ferret eyes gleamed in the gloomy chamber.

"Yea, more, as true as gold," broke in the witch.

"Out upon you, skinny crone!" shouted the stranger. "And would you make the light of God's bright sun no better than Brummagem tinsel?"

"Aweel, awell, mayhap you're right, good mister, but hear to this—"

"I'll hear nothing," interrupted the stranger, "but the business of this sad and dark hour, and you, mother witch, pray shrieve these friends o' yours fro' coming sin, and bind their tongues fro' wanton wagging."

At this appeal Nelly rose, and, rearing her withered arms, gazed with horrible contortion at the trio of new comers for some time without speaking. Then, turning to a secret closet, she reached a couple of black earthen jars, in one of which were toads and newts, and in the other sprigs of deadly nightshade. Placing a wrinkled bony hand on each jar, she whined out a fearful admonition to the henchmen, in tones which made them quake, binding them over in a secret oath, the betrayal of which would, she assured them, be followed with consequences most dire. Nelly herself years afterwards entrusted the secret to her youngest grand-daughter, but for whose garrulousness possibly these pages had never been penned. When this formal bond of secrecy had been ratified by a muttering of dread oaths and curses over the horrid jars, the company, on a sign from the stranger, crouched round the smouldering embers of the midnight fire, and the stranger, after wistful glances round the room to see that no one else was present, commenced, in tones just raised above a whisper, to entrust his secret to the expectant henchmen. There was a wild pallor in the speaker's face as he slowly proceeded, and, by the fitful light of the waning fire, the revengeful, passionate yearning was heightened into an expression almost fiendish to behold. At intervals in his delivery there were demonstrations of mingled surprise and fear among the listeners, which irritated the stranger to exclaim more than once.

"This wretched hag told me I should find knaves, not milksops, here."

"Aye, aye, and mother witch was right enow," retorted Kat Rhodes, but 'angels save us!' it's sic a bonnie castle, an' as for the baron, a truer gentleman never stept God's earth."

The stranger placed a handful of gold coins on the table, and pointing to the glittering heap, said in a decisive tone, "You know your errand now, and you see your reward, which will be doubled if the work is bravely done. Do you serve me in this matter or no?"

A momentary pause ensued, which was broken by the shrill voice of the greedy-eyed crone, who said tauntingly,—

"O dear a me! what a brave crew ye are! This errand is sure not half so bloody as the murderin o' the watchman on 'Hampton Green, in which each one o' ye had a hand?" On which the compact was sealed, and the three became sworn henchmen to the stranger from that hour.

It was broadening into daylight when the stranger took his departure along the highway towards Bilston, and he walked with quick step past that town and through Moxley to the High Bullen at Wednesbury. There he halted out of curiosity to listen to a company of psalm singers around whom were gathered some hundreds of men, women, and children—a motley crowd—some jeering, some cursing, and others seriously joining in the chorus. Presently a venerable-looking man, whose silver locks fluttered in the breeze, stood upon an extemporized platform, and in a loud, clear voice addressed the multitude. The stranger was charmed by the voice of the evangelist, and drank in eagerly his first words, but presently the preacher spoke of the falling of the tower of Siloam on the unrighteous few, and the stranger grew weary and tried to elude the searching glances of the good man; but when in a loud voice the speaker asserted, "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord," the stranger fairly winced, and slunk away to the nearest tavern, where in fiery brandy he tried to find solace for his troubled thoughts, and at length succeeded so far as to enjoy the newest phase of the scene—the preacher pelted by the mob—and even to join in the chorus of the rabble—

"Mr. Wesley's come to town, boys,
To try to pull the churches down, boys,—
His sermons are vile and his prayers are all evil,
And his doctrines and songs have come straight from the devil." [*]

PART III.

Another Christmas-tide had come and gone, with its full measure of mirth at the old castle of Dudley. There was special cause of merriment that Yule in the recent marriage of Lord Mildred and the Lady Fanny, in whose honour the Baron resolved to have a festive gathering of more than common splendour. The lamps shone like a galaxy of stars on that merry March evening which was fixed for the feast, and the assemblage of guests was proportionately great, both in number and brilliance. The bride and bridegroom were amongst the latest arrivals, and they had quite an ovation as they passed through the gay and glittering throng assembled to bid them welcome. The old Baron was in high glee, both because of the princely rent-roll of his ward's husband, and because by this marriage he had foiled the ambitious hopes of young Sir Edward, the son of his sworn foe. The feast was glorious, the viands, from the boar's head downwards, being all in keeping with the season of Yule—a season which was ever observed at the Castle until the Feast of Our Lady. There was much mirth among the guests, to which the Baron's jesting added a seasonable relish. Despite the merriment, however, there ran a whisper round the table—"Does not the bride look sad and pale to night?" which a momentary glance sufficed to answer. The roseate bloom and laughing dimple which heightened her loveliness the preceding Christmas had passed away, and her face, though still retaining its artless, childlike expression, bore traces of care. The dances followed the feast, and the gallery was filled to the full with Welsh harpers, whose lively strains made glad the hearts of all who heard them. Towards midnight the guests adjourned to the supper-room, and the harpers were feasted in the servants' hall. Lady Fanny, who had been sought as a partner in nearly every dance, was too fatigued by this time to appear at the table, and begged Lord Mildred to explain the cause of her absence. She retired for awhile to her chamber, and then the humour seized her to go and see the harpers at their feast, and cheer them with a word of friendly greeting. Great was the wonder of the harpers when the flower of the ball-room entered, leaning on the housekeepers' arm, and right heartily did they pledge her health in a loving cup. One in the plenitude of rapture sang a cheery song, of which the refrain was—

"Fair Queen of Love, so bright, so bright,
Resplendent as a star of night."

The Lady Fanny spoke friendly words to several of the harpers, commending them for their good music and the like, and one of them approached her and in an undertone conveyed the thanks of his companions. Her ladyship changed countenance as he spoke the first word, and withdrew with him apart. In appearance he was a venerable man, but his voice had the clear ring of early manhood. The close observer could have detected through his disguise the countenance and figure of the "stranger" at Nelly Nicholl's, and of Sir Edmund at the last Yule-tide feast. What wild words were spoken between this distinguished harper and the Lady Fanny none may ever know, but true it is that the latter returned to the guest-chamber paler and more disconsolate than ever, and with her husband left the castle long before the festivities were over. The strange harper was missing from the gallery after his interview with Lady Fanny and none knew whither he went.

The dancing was just over, and the merry guests were preparing to depart, when a sudden cry of "Fire!" rang from end to end of the stately pile. The music ceased, the voice of mirth grew dumb, and universal panic prevailed. A flash like lighting lit up the dim corridor, and the affrighted guests saw the mad flames leaping half across the court-yard. Frantic screams of ladies, cries of "help" from men, groans and strugglings of horses in the stables, rose above the loud crackling of the fire. It soon became evident to all beholders that no efforts could arrest the fury of the flames, and to escape with safety was every moment a matter of greater difficulty. Through doors and casements the horror-stricken guests rushed in haste, and as they crossed the drawbridge they saw the north wall of the castle in one vast sheet of liquid flame. Huge beams crackled and fell like blazing faggots; massive roofs came thundering down in atoms; the window glass ran down in scorching streams; and the scene in the castle yard was one of awful terror and confusion. The fire lit up the old town of Dudley with a lurid light, and the townsfolk hastened by scores and hundreds to the castle, but the giant flames made sport of all attempts to stop their mad career. Leaping into the air, darting into the courtyard, they raged with fiendish vengeance until every hope of saving the grand old castle was relinquished in despair. The guests and a few valued treasures were all that could be rescued from the greedy appetite of the flames. At day-break the whole building seemed one mass of fire. The district was illuminated as it had never been since Druid beacons summoned men to evening sacrifice. Thousands flocked to the destructive and awfully majestic scene. For three days and nights the huge pile blazed and crumbled, and it was then left the mournful wreck of faded splendour which it now remains.

PART IV.

The fire at the castle was just at its wildest height when four men stole from the court-yard with guilty tread. All of them were harpers in disguise. The names of three were Kat Rhodes, Sammon Harry, and Devil Lees. The fourth was Sir Edmund. They went in haste to the cottage of Nelly Nicholls, who as before was waiting to receive them, and there they spent the few remaining hours of night in drunken revelry.

* * * * * *

A year rolled by, and in its train it brought sorrowful changes. Lord Mildred's sudden death had made a widow of Lady Fanny in her twentieth year, and she herself was ailing, and cared only to live for her child, a sweet blue-eyed boy. Sir Edmund was an inmate of a mad-house, ever frantic in his ravings after Lady Fanny. After some months of widowhood, she went at the chaplain's request to see him, on a pilgrimage of mercy. Wild eyes flashed upon her from the hopeless lunatic as she confronted him, but presently his raging intensified. Falling on his knees before her he shouted incoherently, "Fire! fire! Oh, pale young bride! Oh, money! money! money! Witches' jars! And what said the preacher, 'Vengeance is mine!' Ah! how the fire burned! Three wizards and a witch! What said the preacher? 'Vengeance is mine!' What said the preacher? 'Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord!' "

With these utterances at the topmost pitch of his voice he grew exhausted, and his attendant bore him gently away from the widow's presence, remarking, "Such have been his wanderings, my lady, since he first came to the asylum, and at the sight of fire or the sound of music he becomes excessively violent."

Lady Fanny made many enquiries from the warders, and one of them gave her a couplet which in his earlier stage he wrote over and over again on every scrap of paper that came in his way. It was as follows:—

"Water went round it to guard it from the foe,
The fire shall burn it and lay its towers low."

This scrap was treasured by her ladyship and was to her both a surprise and a mystery, though it was sadly suggestive. It never came to be explained, however, for within a month of her visit Sir Edmund died by the violence of his own hands in his asylum cell, and in his grave was buried the secret of a century—

"Who burnt Dudley Castle?"

A NEW POEM.

BY ROBERT B. HOLT.

[Under the title of "The Skald," Mr. Robert B. Holt, author of "Kynwith, &c., has written a poem (not yet published) in several cantos, from which, prefacing the extract with these explanatory lines, we make the following selections. In A.D. 994, Svend, King of Denmark, being distrustful of his allies the Jomsbergers, induced them to attack his enemy Jarl Hakon in hopes of profiting by their mutual destruction. Under the leadership of Sigvald, aided by Vagn and Bui, they started on the venture, and in due course arrived unexpectedly on the coast of Norway. At this point the sixth canto opens. Having completed the sacrifice of Hakon's favourite son, Thorgerd Hördabrud takes part in a night attack on the Jombergers. Sigvald suddenly awakened, recognises the priestess standing on the prow of a ship and launching fiery javelins at him. Overcome by fear, and believing his foes have obtained Satanic aid, he cuts the cables which bind the ships together, and by seeking safety in flight spreads a panic through the fleet; Bui, scorning to fly or yield, commits suicide, while Vagn, armed with the sword of an old sea-king, fated to destroy Hördabrud, still struggles with overwhelming numbers and by a last effort buries it in her heart.]

* * * * * *

The black line of Jomsberg from shore unto shore
Closed in the wide bay that no foeman might pass,
Great twisted hemp serpents the ships girded o'er
To make the whole fleet one impervious mass.
And Sigvald slept calmly and dreamt that the morn
Would yield Hakon's fame to his mercy or scorn.

A shade rising landward comes stealing along
And spreads out to measure the length of the line.
Keen eyes quickly see it; hopes shrewdly divine,
War thunder there gathers the loud notes of song.
A word is passed round; ship answers to ship,
The heroes awaken and stand to their arms.
Bui grasps the broad axe in his terrible grip,
Vagn waves his strange weapon and wakens its charms.[*]
A voice seems to hum 'mong the runes of the blade
First omen of evil, then promise of aid.
And he hears it with ears
Deaf to whispers of fears,
That weakness had tutored, till soul was dismayed.

A wild sudden cry! a wing'd tempest of steel!
A crashing of timber as sea castles meet.
A shudder vibrating the length of the fleet,
A moment the stoutest, the manliest reel.
Then roused beyond manhood they spring from the shock,
Tenfold in their fury, tenfold in their might,
Rejoiced when their fingers in death-grapple lock
The throat of a foe they no longer can smite.
Revenge gathers life from his gurgling breath,
And dies in flushed energy glutted with death.

Jarl Sigvald awakes at the cry of alarm,
Amazed at the clamour, aghast at the sight!
Are these the faint-hearted who fled from his arm?
Why come they like demons created to fight?
And lo! on a bark
Which looms through the dark
A tall woman stands launching javelins of flame,
He sees her! he knows her! he utters her name!
It acts on his crew like a dire spoken spell!
They echo his words, hasty-prompted by fear!
"Why bide we till stark ruin grapple us here?
We vowed against men! these are counted by hell!"
"Why bide we?" and none stay'd his arm when he cleft
Those cables which bound the whole fleet into one!
The panic spread fast! spring of courage was gone;
None cared for the combat; they weakened and left;
But each for that life
He had thrust into strife
Risk'd the fingers of Honour to snatch at again,
And that young blushing morn
Heard the first words of scorn
Ever spoken of Jomsberg by heroes disdain.

But wrathful beheld how the pale Nithings fled!
Plied his axe yet more fiercely on foeman who prest;
No foot would he yield to the boldest or best,
But foeman on foeman beat backward or sped.
But Hördabrud comes with her tokens of dread,
And foeman on foeman still press to the fray.
His firm brother band is fast melting away
Like iceberg, when Odin gleams fiercely o'er head.
He scowled all defiant, then glanced at the sea!
"Now follow me! overboard, brothers of Bui."
And all in their arms, every youth, every man,
Through briny paths rush'd to the palace of Ran,[†]

As a meek flock of doves whom an eagle affrays,
The proud fleet of Jomsberg is scatter'd and scared!
The heroes who yesterday Æiser had dared
Now flee from the arts a wierd woman displays.
But 'mid the blind hurry, one steadfast of soul
Nerves his crew by high words and invincible look!
Vagn Death ever welcomes, but shame cannot brook;
He counts not foes' thousands, but faces the whole.
Jarl Eirik and Hakon bear down on him now.
In ship with that rampant fate crone on her prow
Each billow boils up at a touch of her stem,
As fire-bolt of Niord had smitten its crest—
A train flows behind with a scintillant hem,
She comes all alone far ahead of the rest!

* * * * * *

The young light just gives them what guidance they need.
Just shows them when foeman yet waits for his foe,
And their blood-thirsty wills are parching with greed—
Warm draught that wells up from life's fountain of woe.
A shock and a shout!
The tide gushes out
From a hundred broad gashes, warm! ruddy and bright,
Vagn springs at the troll hag! she shrieks at the sight,
For the weapon she dreads flashes bare in his hand—
Flashes bare, and upheaved with that madness of might
Which spares not for mercy while foemen withstand.
Her eye cannot blunt the keen edge of a blade [‡]
That mountain dwarfs toiling for sea-reaper made,[‖]
She knows as they know
Whose monitions grow
To conscious perception, her destiny's face—
One shrill mocking laugh, re-echoed from space,
A grapple that quenches an impotent dart
Then thrilling with pain,
Pride quells by disdain;
The broken sword quivers—Death sheathed in her heart.

TWELFTH NIGHT IN FRANCE.

Here is a picture (page 268) representing the interior of many a home in Paris on Twelfth Night.

It might be an English family assembled round the table, so remarkably jolly does everyone appear—might be but for one omission—there is no large cake covered with white sugar, and decorated with sundry pastry-cook warriors and devices. The table, indeed, seems rather scantily furnished with good things. In all, there are but a dish of pears, two wine glasses, no wine, and very few plates. One marvels where the two men were lucky enough to find the champagne they seem to be drinking. Nevertheless, the merry party is evidently enjoying itself. Grandpapa is dividing a cake in which, after the fashion of our ring in the apple-pie, a prize is expected to be found. Watch the anxiety of all around. With the exception of baby, who is vigourously sucking dolly's head, and the young lady who has fallen asleep overcome by the evening's dissipation, all are deeply concerned in the discovery that has just been made. The girl on the right has gained the prize, much to the disappointment of her brother, who stares with astonishment across the table. Even grandmamma is dumb with amazement. Twelfth-night abroad is called the Fête of the Kings, after a festival of the Church to commemorate the finding of the Saviour at Bethlehem by the Magi. At the back of the group is seen a curly-headed boy being taught his first lesson in Scripture history from a painting that is on the wall. If thus considered, the engraving of this merry meeting may be of good account by recalling the event with which the anniversary is associated.

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[*] This distich was commonly sung in Wednesbury at that time by the persecutors of the early Methodists.

[*] The Norsemen were great believers in magical weapons.

[†] The goddess who claimed all who were drowned at sea.

[‡] It was believed certain eyes had the power of blunting any ordinary weapon.

[‖] Viking.

THE MYSTERIOUS MORISSON.

BY EDWARD LEGGE.

CHAPTER I.

“BY THE SAD SEA WAVES.”

A bright December afternoon—the lightest of wintry winds fanning the sails of the craft in Baymouth Bay, the esplanade dotted with promenaders taking brisk constitutionals, a few passengers coming from the railway station and going towards the quay where the Jersey boat lies placidly at anchor, as though there was no such thing as putting to sea in the coldness of the midnight; and two or three venerable “salts” smoking the weed of contentment, calm in their enjoyment of Bristol bird’s-eye and characteristically taciturn.

This is Baymouth, that deservedly popular watering-place, on a December afternoon. If you were to be told that the town was made fashionable by one of the Georges, you would perhaps recognise the locality; I therefore withhold the information.

Amongst the promenaders on Baymouth beach this afternoon there are none who particularly attract attention. There are the Misses Gushington, with their flaxen hair done into the most preposterous *chignon* ever seen out of the Closerie de Lilas, that delectable resort in the suburbs of the Gay City; the Misses Gushington, those novel-reading, slang-talking, high-heel-boot-wearing, amiable young ladies, who think croquet the pastime most approaching to the sublimity of earthly bliss, and the officers from the neighbouring barracks the finest and most adorable fellows in the world. There are also the Messrs. Spoonbill and Corset, who, in pea-jackets and bowler-hats, affect that maritime appearance which is characteristic of all men-dwellers by the sea; and who pass their days in staring at the Miss G.’s and their nights at the billiard-room of the Royal White Elephant and Castle Hotel, opposite which in the summer time white-chokered “niggers” yell their sentimental melodies the while the moon throws her silvery rays upon Father Ocean and scorns the effulgence she wastes upon “bones” and banjoist. Also, at the far end of the esplanade are a lady and gentleman, to whom, as they play a rather important part in this history, permit the scribe to refer in more detail than that bestowed upon the other *dramatis personæ*. Who indeed have nothing whatever to do with the story, and who are only introduced as a setting to the cabinet-picture about to be uncovered.

Although it is December, Mrs. James Morisson, sketchbook and pencil in hand, is sitting on a campstool within a few feet of the water, sketching or pretending to sketch that long edging of white cliff that forms so prominent a feature in the view. Wearing a thick blue-serge dress, and a sealskin jacket lined with crimson satin, Mrs. Morisson, whose yellow hair droops in thick masses over her shoulders, is thinking about as much of her drawing as she is about equations or the specific gravity of matter. Her liquid brown eyes, which she has a trick of concealing with her drooping eyelashes, are looking far out seawards; looking, perhaps, at that thin, white wreath of smoke curling upwards from the funnel of the incoming steamer from the Channel Islands; or at the little Island to her right, where, in their grey dresses, manacled, and objurgating Heaven and earth as they toil and sweat at stone-breaking, their brows marked with crime and villainy’s unmistakeable impress, you can see the convicts through the white mist that is beginning to displace the sunshine.

Whatsoever Mrs. Morisson may be thinking about, it is pretty clear that her companion’s sole thoughts are centred upon her. Charlie Halkin—for that is the name of the young gentleman—with one hand clasps firmly Mrs. Morisson’s dainty palm, unprotected by any sheltering glove at present; the other holds his meerschaum, which he is unaware has gone out fully an hour. A law-student, with a taste for dramatic literature, Charlie, having nothing better to do this vacation-time, thought one night, as he was walking home from the theatre to his modest Pimlico lodging, he might as well pass a few days by the sea as do anything else. Reflecting that night that he knew no one at Baymouth, he decided on going there for the purpose of quiet, of the need of which his pale face spoke volumes. Packing up his traps the first thing next morning, and chartering a hansom to Waterloo station, he was off by the early train, and by two o’clock had taken up his quarters at No. 5, Acacia-place, and was sauntering along the beach before dinner, when he was surprised to hear himself called by name in a soft whisper, and to be suddenly confronted by the lady with whom he was now enjoying so agreeable a *tête-à-tête*.

Halkin had come to know Mrs. Morisson in this fashion. In the previous summer, being at Baden with his friend Rolson, who was doing holiday sketches for the *Evening Moonbeam*, he had been asked and had consented to stake a few napoleons on the red for an elderly lady, whose luck had been so great that Mrs. Morisson, who was drinking the waters at the German Spa, requested him to perform the like service for her. Charlie, proud of the commission, did so with a pleasure that changed into delight when the fair unknown, turning her brown orbs full upon him, thanked the young fellow with such genuine warmth that his susceptible heart beat with unusual vigour when the lady, turning to a middle-aged, gentlemanly-looking man who entered the room just before the play terminated, pointed to Charlie as the gentleman who had been the means of putting a couple of hundred napoleons in her purse. Mr. Morisson, for by that name the gentleman announced himself, was profuse in his acknowledgments of Charlie’s politeness, and hoped that, before they left Baden, they should have the pleasure of making Mr. Halkin’s further acquaintance. Charlie, his face all aglow with the adventure, expressed the delight which it would afford him to know Mr. and Mrs. Morisson, and went home to dream all night of the yellow-haired syren at the Kursaal. He had seen them since that night only once—at London-bridge station on their return to town, when, in response to his salutation, she gave him a smile which sent the blood coursing through his veins with a rapidity that nothing save an unexpected government appointment could have produced. Now he had thus unexpectedly met her alone on Baymouth beach. Nor was Charlie inclined to lament Mr. Morisson’s absence; for there was an undefinable air of mystery about that gentleman that Halkin could not fathom. He had his own suspicions, but, like many other heroes of romance, he kept them to himself.

After an interchange of mutual civilities, they walked backwards and forwards on the beach, chatting about Baden life and how each had spent the time since their return from that pleasant holiday trip. Pacing the esplanade at Baymouth is rather different from walking up and down the well-kept paths in the Row, and Mrs. Morisson at length proposed a rest. Then it was that Charlie Halkin found himself *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Morisson on Baymouth esplanade.

For a few moments after seating themselves neither spoke. The wash of the incoming tide; the shrill, wailing cry of a sea-bird; the faint notes of a piano that came from a house at the far end of the esplanade—this was all that could be heard. High above in the grey heavens the red sun gleamed like a ball of fire, and was marked alike by the fettered wretches on the opposite island and the lady and gentleman who had thus unexpectedly been thrown together.

Desisting for a minute from the interesting pastime of throwing pebbles into the water, Charlie suddenly looked up to find his companion’s eyes fixed upon him. The youth’s face reddened till it grew crimson as the sinking sun that was now fast disappearing below the horizon. He was re-commencing the amusement which he had thrown aside, when Mrs. Morisson, laying one hand lightly upon Charlie’s shoulder, said—

“Talk to me.”

This time the boy looked up with his cheeks still flushed, yet not of that bright hue which Mrs. Morisson said reminded her of the scarlet-runners that grew in the garden at her country home down in Devonshire.

“Talk to you?” he replied. “Oh! all right. But what shall I talk about? I haven’t got the gift of the gab, as they call it; and, besides, I don’t know what is likely to interest you.”

“Talk about yourself,” she rejoined, with her gaze full upon him. “Anything you may have to tell me about your work, your prospects, your aspirations, your hopes, will be welcome. I don’t know why, or how it is, but from the first day I saw you I have felt an interest in all that concerns you. Don’t ask me why, for, as I have just said, I can no more tell you than I can say why the tide ebbs and flows.”

Her hand remained upon his shoulder as she spoke, and the water, plashing in the stillness of the afternoon, seemed to the youth to chant a love-song as it rose and fell.

“How do you employ yourself at your office?” she said. “Read musty law-books all day and all night, I suppose, don’t you?”

“Yes,” he answered, not quite as steadily as he would have spoken to the special pleader under whose watchful eye he was placed. “Yes; I do a good deal of reading; but you would not be interested if I were to talk of that description of literature, which is too dry even for me, and which I cannot regard as I ought to do. I shall never be a lawyer, Mrs. Morisson—I don’t like my profession; I haven’t got what is called ‘the legal mind,’ and I don’t want to have it. I’d rather be anything else, of course, than what I am—a doctor, a journalist, a magazine-writer, or even a penny-a-liner on the London press, than in those dreary Temple chambers all day grinding away at ‘cases’ that I shall never master.”

“You will laugh at me, I know, but I assure you I should like to see ‘Coke’ in the Thames, with a hundred lightermen sailing over him daily, and ‘Lyttleton’ at the bottom of the bay.”

Mrs. Morisson smiled at his enthusiasm, but said nothing.

“There, you see,” Mrs. Morisson, he continued, in an assumed injured tone, “I told you how it would be. You are laughing at my stupidity.” And he was getting up, when a gentle pressure on his shoulder bade him remain seated.

“You wrong me, Mr. Halkin, when you talk like that—you do, indeed. I was smiling at your earnestness, that was all. You will believe me, won’t you?”

“Believe you! of course I will. You don’t suppose I should be rude enough to do anything else, I hope.”

“No; but I like to see you in earnest, Mr. Halkin,” she continued, speaking very slowly and emphatically. “You have sufficient enthusiasm to enable you to make yourself what you wish, if you only applied yourself to it, as I believe you will. I saw something you wrote the other day—don’t be agitated; a printed slip fell out of your pocket at Baden; I took it up, and, seeing that it was print, was rude enough to read it. Here it is, you see—I have had it in my purse ever since.” She held the paper up as she spoke.

“I’m sure it’s very kind of you to be so complimentary, but that which you have in your hand is about the stupidest thing I ever did.”

“Ah, that is what you all say, you men—you always depreciate your own handiwork. But I like it, and that is sufficient, is it not?”

“O, if *you* like it, that is quite another affair,” he replied. “I should think no trouble too great as long as it—”

“Yes,” she said, “go on, please. What were you going to say?”

“Well, as long as it gratified you, I intended to say, if you don’t think it absurd.”

“Absurd! really, Mr. Halkin, you are excessively polite. Why should I think it absurd?”

“No, no,” he rejoined hurriedly, while the colour came and went from his face—“I didn’t mean to say that. What I meant was that—that I should be only too glad to please you in any way, only—”

“Well, sir, only what?”

“Why, you see, you’re married, and I thought—that is, I supposed, your husband wouldn’t particularly like you to take any interest in a fellow like me, who has his own way to make in the world, with no friends to speak of.”

“There you are again!—on the high horse once more. You don’t understand me. No one will be more glad than I shall be to see you get on in life, as I venture to prophecy you will, though I know so little of you. You mustn’t think you have no friends in the world, unless you include me in your list of nobodies.”

“No, no—I would rather have your good word and your—well, your esteem, than that of anybody else. But it’s getting late, and I’m sure it is too cold for you to be out on the beach, Mrs. Morisson; hadn’t we better go? In what part of the town do you live?”

He gave her his hand as he said this, and then, putting her arm in his, continued—

“You will let me have the pleasure of seeing you home, won’t you?”

“Certainly,” she answered, in a tone that betrayed some agitation. “You may see me home, if you like, but what can you think of me after this? I have been talking more like a sentimental school girl than a woman of the world. Now tell me, haven’t I sunk in your good opinion!”

Her voice faltered, and Charlie could see that her eyes were wet with tears, which she took no pains to conceal. He took her hand and pressed it to his lips; then, drawing her towards him, and she unresisting, their lips met, and in that blissful moment the boy tasted of the sweets of love as he never had before. Not speaking, with her arm locked in his, they hurried along the esplanade and did not stop until they reached a house at the corner of a street.

“Here we must say good-bye, dear boy,” she said, as composedly as she could; “but I shall expect to see you to-morrow, and you won’t disappoint me, will you? How long do you stay here?”

“Only till the day after to-morrow,” he replied, with her hand in his. “I must return to London then, as I expect to get an engagement to do something for the Parnassus Theatre.”

“Come in to-morrow evening, then, and dine with us *en famille*. And now good-bye.”

“Good-bye—God bless you.”

The door closed and she was gone, and Charlie felt alone in the world.

He hastened to his rooms, dined with what appetite he could get up, and then, with his German pipe well filled, strolled down the beach until he came to the house where Mrs. Morisson lived. There was a seat just opposite; and here, listening to the waves whispering one dear name ever in his ears, he sat and watched the light in the drawing-room until it disappeared, when, looking round, he found that he was the last lounger on the beach, and that the church clocks were striking Twelve in every variety of key and tone!

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERIOUS MORISSON.

Mr. James Morisson, formerly of Cupola-court, Chancery-lane, attorney-at-law; then of Ebury-street, Belgravia, out of business, an uncertificated bankrupt; then of Boulogne, gentleman; subsequently of the City of Paris, clerk to a wine merchant in the Rue Lafitte; and later of Craven-street, Strand, London, secretary to the Atlantic and South-Pacific Life Assurance Company, Limited; anon a gambler at Baden; more recently of the Island of Portland, in the county of Dorset, convict; and at the date of this story in hiding at Baymouth, under the same roof as his wife and mother, and “wanted” by the police:—this enterprising gentleman’s life had been one of very great vicissitudes. First up, then down the ladder—then up once more, and down again to the lowest rung, Mr. Morisson had passed a most eventful career. He had been struck off the rolls for being concerned in a little matter connected with a will which the learned Judge before whom the case came was rude enough to call by the name of forgery, but which could not be satisfactorily proved against him. Going through the Bankruptcy Court shortly afterwards, with a virtuous resolve to come out whitewashed and clear of all his debts, the Commissioner, while discharging him, gave him no certificate, but administered so severe a judicial castigation to the ex-attorney that in the then blissfully uncertain state of the law of libel the newspapers excused themselves from publishing certain parts of it. Finding public opinion so dead against him in this country, Mr. Morisson took refuge in Boulogne, where he met several of his compatriots, who got quite confidential over their pipes and gin-and-water, and confided to each other the particulars of the little affairs for which they were suffering the miseries of expatriation. Morisson’s *amor patriæ* brought him to grief. He returned to England, and, with the assistance of another equally sharp and equally unfortunate practitioner, established the Atlantic and South-Pacific Assurance Company. This scheme, to do Mr. Morisson every possible justice, was one of the most gigantic swindles of the day. A prospectus was issued announcing a capital of £500,000; the assured were to receive a bonus every three years; the premiums were fixed at a very small amount; and the public took the bait, sending in their sovereigns and five-pound notes to the Atlantic and South-Pacific office with as much alacrity as though the premises in the little street leading out of the Strand were those of the Old Lady in Threadneedle-street. For six months the swindle succeeded; then the bubble burst. A poor clerk dying, whose life had been assured for £500, his wife sent in her claim, which the secretary promised should be settled at once. But week after week passed, and no money came from the office. The widow put the case into legal hands, and the result was that Mr. Morisson was taken into custody on a charge of obtaining money under false pretences, with no reasonable probability of ever re-paying it. Following the widow’s example, hundreds of other assurers came forward and laid their grievances before the Court, and the affair was a nine days’ talk in the City. Morisson’s partner in the scheme fled, and was discovered three weeks afterwards, a couple of miles down the river, dead as a door-nail. The learned counsel who undertook Morisson’s defence contended that that gentleman had been the victim of his partner’s designs; but papers found upon the suicide, who preferred the bottom of the Thames to probable transportation for life, proved that Morisson was the sole originator of the scheme. The case was so clear, and Morisson’s guilt so transparent, that the jury found him guilty with no extenuating circumstances, and the learned Judge, amidst solemn stillness in the Court, sentenced Morisson to fifteen years’ penal servitude.

His wife (whom he had treated badly) and his children (for whom he had never cared) went to live with Mrs. Morisson, sen., who possessed a small competency at Baymouth; and here for five years they resided peacefully and happily. But late one dark November night there came a hurried rapping at the door of their little house, and, to the astonishment of wife and mother, there entered, claiming shelter and protection, the ex-attorney, ex-secretary to the Atlantic and South-Pacific! Wet through, and starving, he claimed sanctuary in that peaceful dwelling. He had escaped, so he told them, by almost a miracle (as though Heaven would interpose on behalf of such a wretch!), had secured a passage aboard a Jersey fishing-boat, and obtained a sufficient disguise to enable him to walk ashore tolerably safely. Then, with no money, drenched to the skin, weary and footsore, he dragged himself to the house in which his mother and wife and children were living. This was in the summer that had just passed. At his request—his demand rather—Margaret Morisson, who would have been perfectly justified in giving up the scamp to the police, scraped together every penny she could get, and took him to Baden, where he hoped, to use his own words, “to pick up a trifle to begin afresh with;” in which expectation, however, he was disappointed. He lost all—his wife’s trinkets and watch, even, went to satisfy his rapacious thirst for gold. Then Halkin crossed their path at the Kursaal, and the affectionate Morisson urged his wife to draw the young fellow into a *liaison* with her, so that he, the husband of this pure-minded woman, might be enabled to sponge upon him. The wife’s scornful refusal of this infamous proposal was good to witness. She swore the boy should come to no harm—she would protect him, if necessary, herself; and she threatened if Morisson ever again presumed to whisper so hideous a proposition she would betray his whereabouts to the police, who were looking for him in every place but the right, as is often their wont. With bitter recollections of the time passed in the convict settlement—feeling the fetters on his legs, and the rubbing of the coarse dress upon his body—Morisson in this matter obeyed the behests of his wife, though he frequently alluded in sneering language to the impression which Halkin appeared to have made upon her.

And now these two were to meet again!—Halkin ignorant that the woman who showed so much interest in him, and whom he felt he loved better than anyone else, was the wife of an escaped convict for whose capture a large reward was offered!

Morisson, unable to appear out-of-doors, had become a confirmed debauchee. Every penny he could obtain from his wife and mother went into the coffers of the nearest publican, whose gin the convict drank until he became mad at times, stupid at others. Often, in his brutal, drunken fits, he attempted to strike the woman who had sacrificed everything for him—giving up home, and friends, and comforts, to be this reprobate’s wife. One is sometimes inclined to wonder why Heaven permits such sacrifices to be made.

You may wonder at Mrs. Morisson going the length of bringing Charlie in contact with her husband. In her conversations with Halkin, however, Mrs. Morisson found that he had not the faintest suspicion of the real state of affairs—that he had no idea that the woman whom he loved “not wisely, but too well,” was linked for life to a wretch who, if it had answered his ends, would not have scrupled at the blackest of all crimes, murder; and that, in Charlie’s great love for her, he would not think of prying into family secrets. Besides, some uncontrollable impulse hurried her on—an impulse she could not check.

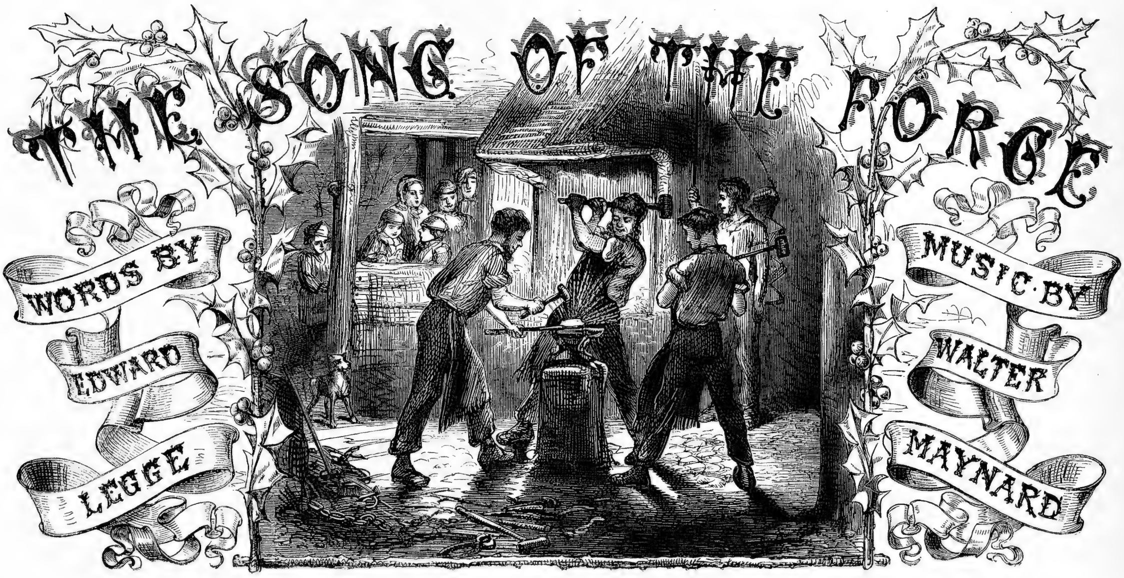
So it came about that Halkin was introduced into the family circle of the Morissons.

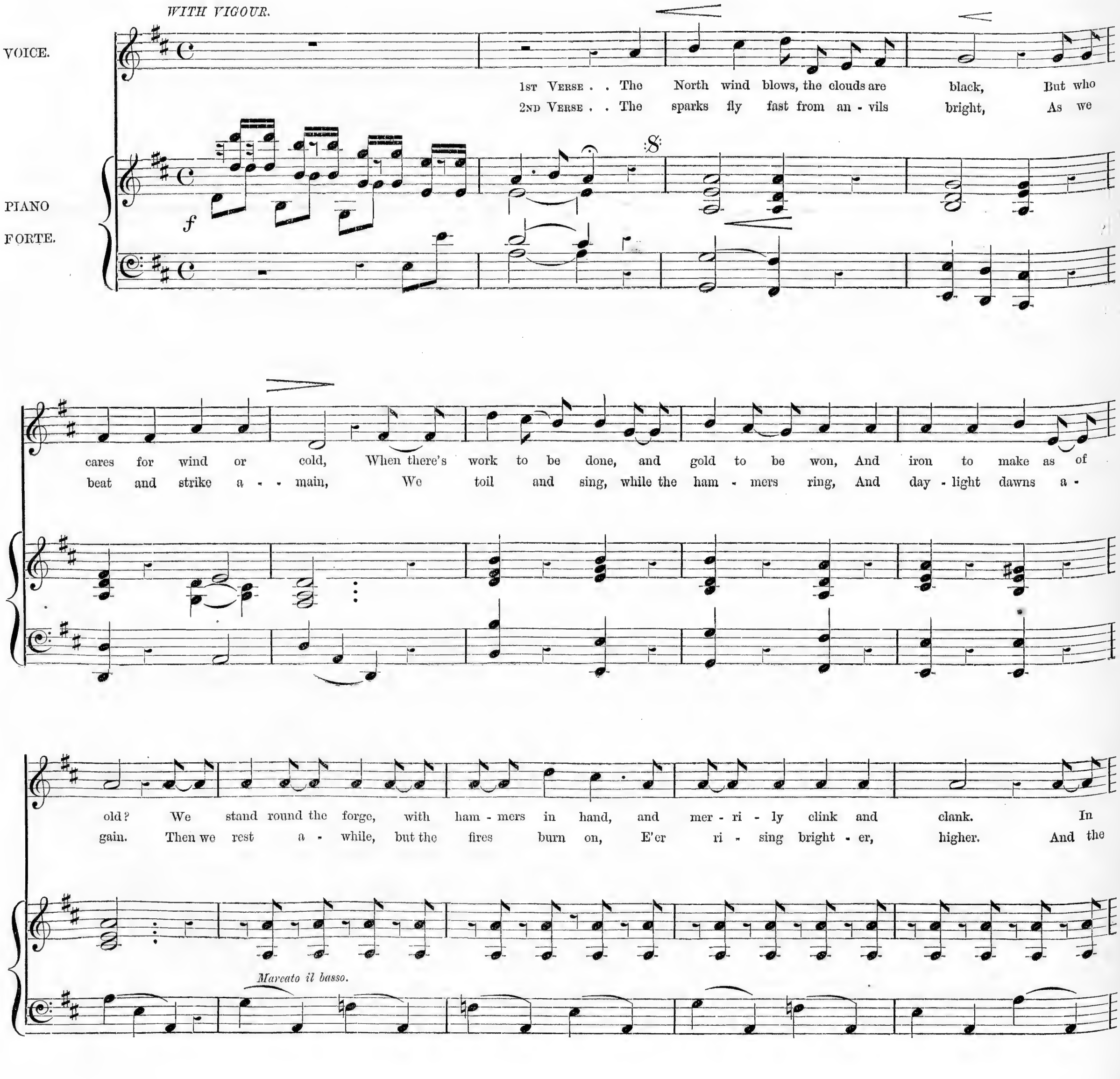
Charlie, keeping his appointment on the following evening to the minute, was met on the stairs by Mrs. Morisson. It was one of the convict’s quiet days, and he was seen to the best possible advantage in a rather seedy suit of evening dress, a chrysanthemum in his button-hole, and a sham diamond ring on the little finger of his right hand. He was unusually steady; for, despite his entreaties and threats, he had been disallowed all intoxicating beverages that day. His mother, a poor faded creature, who had donned one of her daughter’s *moirés* for this occasion, received Charlie as cordially as it was in her nature to do; and Morisson, whose eyes had been feasting on the two bottles of champagne, the cheap sherry, and the dubious port that graced the sideboard, welcomed the guest with some traces of the manner in which he was wont to address his unsuspecting clients in the dingy office in the dingier Chancery-lane court. There was really a nice dinner provided, although, to obtain such an unusual luxury as wine, Mrs. Morisson had been obliged to dispose of one or two *souvenirs* of the past which she greatly prized.

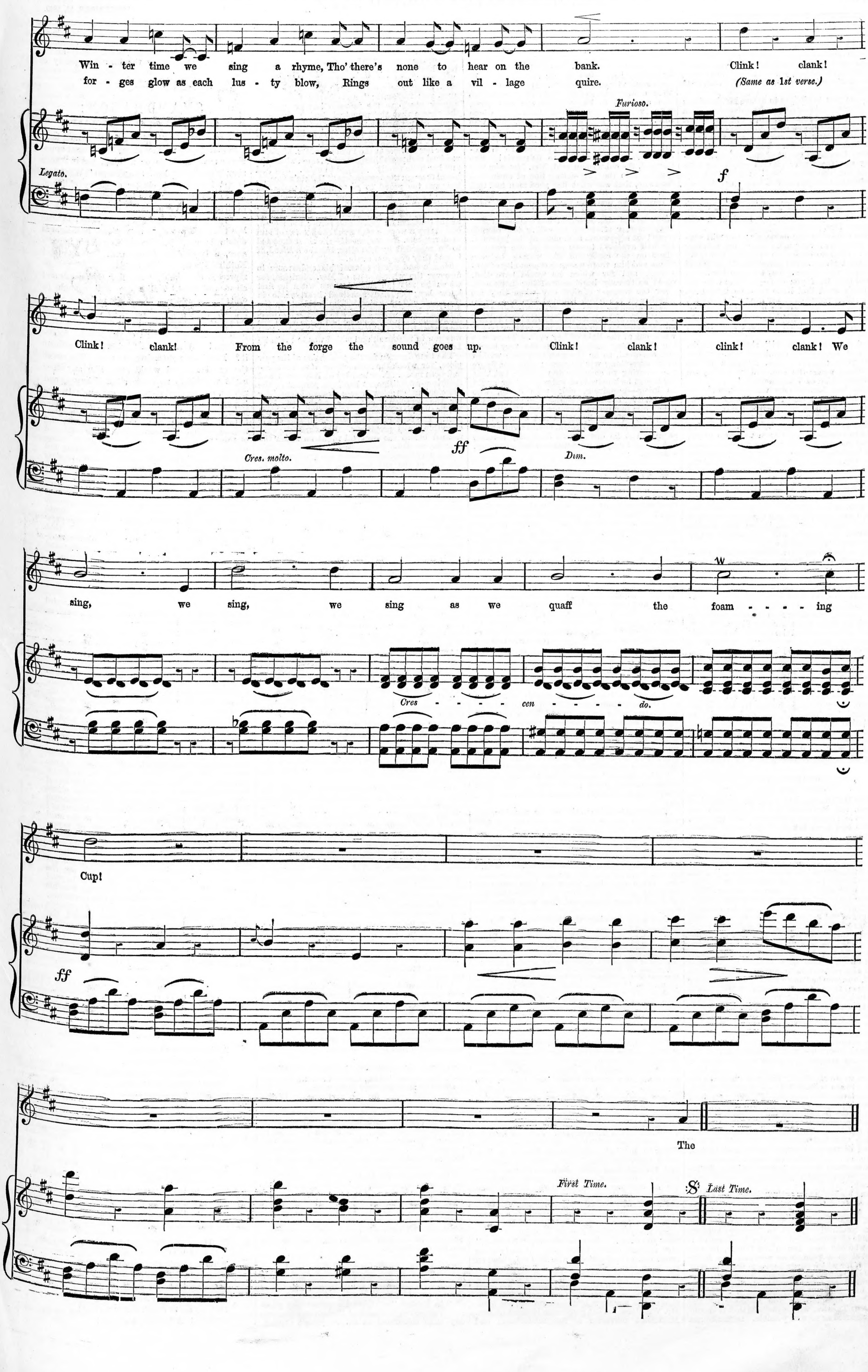
To everybody but Mrs. Morisson the dinner party was as lively as might be. The ex-attorney related certain incidents in his career with which the public were not acquainted, which Charlie listened to good-humouredly, and with a certain admiration. He told his own modest stories, too, which, albeit they were most virtuously dull, were applauded as being particularly good. Dinner over, and the ladies having retired, Morisson bade Charlie pass the bottle and make himself at home. Over some choice cigars, which Halkin presented to the master of the house to that worthy’s unfeigned delight, Morisson grew first eloquent, then communicative, and then rather inebriated, swearing that Halkin was “a good feller, only doosed green, mind you, my boy—doosed green.”

“Fill your g-glass, Charles Halkin, Esquire,” hiccoughed Morisson, his eyes glistening with drunken brilliancy. “Fill up, old c-chap, and I’ll pr’pose a toast. Are you charged? All right, my t-tulip; then, here goes. Here’s to the health of the future Mrs. Halkin. What’s her name—Margaret? You don’t say so? By a sing’lar c’incidence my wife’s name is Margaret, too! How extr’or’nary, ain’t it? Mrs. Margaret Morisson—Mrs. Margaret Halkin! Ha! Halkin, my dear boy, what a blessing is a good wife!—a woman who loves and honours her husband, and all that sort of thing. By Jove! sir, if my wife were to flirt about with fellers, as I’ve seen some women do with boys—mere boys, sir, no older than yourself—I’d—hang it, sir, I’d murder her! I would, by all that’s good!” And Mr. Morrison, whose feelings overcame him at the bare idea of conjugal infidelity, tossed off his wine, and looked as virtuous as a man can look who has drank a bottle and a half of champagne, supplemented by sherry, port, ale, and stout.

Charlie, disgusted at Morisson’s language, though he refrained from showing his disapproba-


THE SONG OF THE FORGE
WORDS BY
EDWARD
LEGGE
MUSIC BY
WALTER
MAYNARD


WITH VIGOUR.
VOICE.
PIANO
FORTE.
f
Marcato il basso.
1st Verse . . The North wind blows, the clouds are black, But who cares for wind or cold, When there's work to be done, and gold to be won, And iron to make as of old? We stand round the forge, with ham - mers in hand, and mer - ri - ly clink and clank. In
2nd Verse . . The sparks fly fast from an - vils bright, As we beat and strike a - - main, We toil and sing, while the ham - mers ring, And day - light dawns a - gain. Then we rest a - while, but the fires burn on, E'er ri - sing bright - er, higher. And the


Win - ter time we sing a rhyme, Tho' there's none to hear on the bank. Clink! clank!
for - ges glow as each lus - ty blow, Rings out like a vil - lage quire.
(Same as 1st verse.)
Furioso.
Legato.
f
Clink! clank! From the forge the sound goes up. Clink! clank! clink! clank! We
Cres. molto.
ff
Dim.
sing, we sing, we sing as we quaff the foam - - - - ing
Cres - - - - cen - - - - do.
Cup!
ff
The
First Time.
Last Time.

tion of it, sat silently listening, now and then throwing in an affirmative, and heartily wishing that his host would fall asleep after his potations. Suddenly, and to Charlie's astonishment, Morisson started up, and, staggering towards Halkin, said —"Tell you what 'tis, young feller, I've a strong belief that Mrs. Morisson is a good deal too fond of you!"

Charlie was beginning to assure Mr. Morisson that he must be labouring under a delusion, when the latter, with drunken gravity, and laying one hand upon Charlie's shoulder, blurted out—

"D-don't deny it, sir—don't say there's no truth in it—it won't do. I ain't blind, sir, like Justice; I watched you at dinner, sir, and I distinctly saw the tender glances which my wife shot at you, you young thief! I saw it all, sir, as plainly as I see you now sitting there in your dandy clothes, and your rings and trinkets."

"Mr. Morisson, are you mad?" asked Charlie, reddening with disgust and anger; "what in the world do you mean, by talking in this manner? Mrs. Morisson—"

"Don't mention her name, sir; you will confer a partic'lar favour upon me by not alluding to her. She's a disgrace to her sex. But never mind, sir, I give you full permission to go in and win her if you choose. Lay siege to her heart, sir, and take it, if you can—you won't be the first who's tried that little game on by a good many. Bless your heart, my dear young friend, at Baden she had scores of lovers—scores. There was the Count Rimini; and the Chevalier de Luna, who has been divorced four times; and——"

"You infernal scoundrel!" shrieked Charlie, rising and seizing the drunken brute. "You lie in your throat! Mrs. Morisson is the best woman under the sun, and as far beyond your appreciation as Venus herself."

Charlie had Morisson by the neck, and was forcing him into a chair, when Mrs. Morisson, her face deathly pale, rushed into the room, and asked what was the matter.

"Matter!" gasped her husband, struggling in vain to release himself from Charlie's grasp, "matter enough, I think, when a married woman invites her lover to dine with her in her husband's house. Oh, don't look at me in that way, ma'am, I won't stand it any longer. I've been mewed up here long enough, and I'll have my liberty now, if I die for it. Give me what money you have, and I'll leave the country for ever—I hate it, and I hate you, and everybody. Supply me with the means, I say, and I'll go, and then you can do as you like—marry this brat, if you will, though I'm afraid his friends will look rather coldly upon a convict's discarded wife!"

With a loud cry, Mrs. Morisson fell prone upon the floor, ere Charlie could catch her in his outstretched arms; and immediately afterwards, before Halkin could reflect upon what was best to do under these extraordinary circumstances, there was a loud knocking at the street-door, and a demand to be admitted in the Queen's name. Looking into the street, Charlie saw that the house was surrounded by policemen, who had at last tracked the convict to his wife's lodgings, and who, by breaking the windows of the lower room, gained admittance to the house. Morisson, divining the cause of the uproar, and seeing no chance of escape, broke away from Charlie, and endeavoured to get into the next room, where, as was afterwards discovered, he kept a revolver ready loaded, and a small phial of poison. In this design he was frustrated; for he opened the door of the dining-room to find himself seized by two detectives, whose assistants crowded upstairs in case their services were required.

"James Morisson," said the chief, "I arrest you as an escaped convict!"

CHAPTER III.

GRAVE AND GAY.

Charlie Halkin, the day after the re-arrest of Morisson, left Baymouth for London, but not before he had again seen the wife of the wretched man who had been taken off to join his former companions in the stone-quarries. Margaret Morisson received him with a sad smile that he remembered years afterwards. How grieved she was at what had occurred she had no need to say; it was evident that the shock had been a great and painful one to her, and one from which she was not apparently likely soon to recover. Her pale face and broken voice excited the liveliest sympathy of Halkin, who bade her be cheerful and think of the future instead of the past. She shook her head mournfully, and said there could be no more happiness for her this side the grave—her whole life was blasted, her hopes shipwrecked, by her husband's crimes. The wife of a convict, whose only chance of ultimate pardon and restoration to liberty had rested on himself, and who had now forfeited all probability of release from imprisonment, who would associate with her and her children? It was not to be expected, she admitted: all she had to look forward to now was that God would take from her the miserable life He had given. With all the energy a stout and reliant heart possessed, Charlie exhorted her not to permit such thoughts as these to absorb her, and reassuring her of his respect and sympathy, hurried back to town to commence his new career. For some time Mrs. Morisson wrote regularly, though her letters were almost always couched in despondent terms. Then one letter after another of Charlie's remained unanswered, and at last the Post-office authorities returned them to him with the information "not known" marked in large red characters on the official envelope. This grieved him more than anything that had occurred; for now he was deprived of the only solace which had buoyed him up, and had made him resolve to strive his utmost to attain that position which Mrs. Morisson had so confidently predicted he would some day reach.

Laying his law-books entirely aside, and giving up the study of the law as being uncongenial to one of his temperament, Charlie Halkin threw himself into new work with the ardour that only a youthful aspirant to literary honours is capable of possessing. By the kindness of a friend who had long known his family, he was appointed to a permanent post on the *Daily Scorpion*, for which paper he wrote the theatrical notices as often as occasion demanded. He also turned his attention to writing for the stage, and was fortunate enough to get one of his pieces accepted by the manager of the Parnassus Theatre, with a promise that it should be represented as soon as possible. In the course of his newspaper duties he wandered over a good deal of England during the months that Parliament sat, collecting material for sketches and articles to be printed in the dull season, when the paper was not flooded with reports of legislative and legal proceedings; at this period he once more visited Baymouth. His enquiries as to Mrs. Morisson's whereabouts were futile; no one appeared to know where she had gone, with the exception of an old charwoman whom Mrs. Morisson had once employed, and who expressed her belief that the lady had gone to London. To London! where he had sought everywhere for her—from Tyburnia to Whitechapel, from Westminster to Belgravia! She thought, the old woman said, Mrs. Morisson was a-going into the play-acting line of business—leastwise, that was what her good man had told her.

During the few days that he passed at Baymouth, Charlie paced up and down the beach where he and Mrs. Morisson had walked on that happy winter afternoon preceding the terrible scene that afterwards took place at the lodgings. He half expected to see amongst the group of idlers on the esplanade the woman between whom and him there was such community of sentiment, and for whom he would have died, could he thereby have secured her happiness. How the memory of that day when they sat together on the beach haunted him now, as he strolled alone by the sea! He remembered her every look and word—how kindly she talked, how she cheered him on, and how solitary he felt when out of the light of her eyes. There was the stone they had sat upon—the very shells and sea-weed, so he thought, they had walked over—everything was the same; only one figure was wanting to complete the picture, but that one might be hundreds of miles away for aught he knew—despairing, sick unto death, who could tell? The Misses Gushington promenaded before him in autumn costume, but Charlie saw them not. Messrs. Spoonbill and Corset, those fascinating young gentlemen, looked inquisitively at him, but he disregarded their silly glances, and thought only of what was now but a memory, a dream.

Hush! what is that dull, heavy, booming sound that comes from the little Island opposite, where the convicts are toiling as they were this time last year, as they will be this time next year? Boom! The excitement on the beach increases as the second gun is heard; and the intelligence passes quickly that a convict has escaped and that the warders are out searching for him. It is said that the man has thrown himself into the water, in expectation of reaching a small boat that was lying off the Island; and that, as he did not halt when challenged a soldier on duty fired at and it is believed hit the convict. Be that as it may, the hue-and-cry was raised, and boats were hastily manned and joined in the pursuit. Charlie, whose professional instinct warned him that he ought not to miss the opportunity, chartered a small sailing-boat, and was soon flying over the water towards the place where the prisoner was seen to disappear.

The boats all made towards a point at the back of the Island, where a small boat, which had only one man in her during the early part of the day, was now being sculled rapidly towards a tiny object bobbing up and down in the water as wave after wave dashed in and left a thousand wavelets scattered on the rocky shore. Charlie, by the aid of his glass, saw that this object was a man, sorely buffeted by the waves, and swimming for life towards the boat which was nearing him; and he steered his little craft in the direction to which all the other boats converged.

"Ahoy there!" shouted the officer in charge of the pursuing party to the man in the small rowing-boat—"ahoy! stop, or we fire. Stop, I say!"

The rower took no notice of the warning, but pursued his speedy course towards the man who was fighting with the waves, and who it was now apparent was the escaped convict. In a moment the flash of a gun lit up the gathering darkness, and the rower fell out of his boat a helpless mass of humanity. Almost at the same time the man in the water, whose last chance of escape was thus taken from him, threw up both arms convulsively, gave one loud cry of distress that few who heard ever forgot, and then went down like lead.

The next evening the *Scorpion*, a day in advance of the other journals, contained Charlie's narrative of the whole affair, with this addition telegraphed from "Our own Correspondent:"

"Baymouth, 6 p.m. This afternoon, at low tide, the warders of the convict establishment, who had been on the watch all day, discovered two bodies on the rocks. One was the body of a man unknown, but who evidently belonged to a Jersey fishing boat; the other that of the escaped convict Morisson, whose frauds in connection with the Atlantic and South Pacific Assurance Company will be remembered by the public. Both bodies are to be buried on the island to-morrow."

* * * * * * *

When Mrs. Morisson left Baymouth with her children, a few weeks after her husband's arrest, she determined to make London her future home if she could succeed in obtaining sufficient employment to maintain herself and family, who were too young to be of any service to her. Before she married, and when she was living with her parents in their pleasant Bayswater home, she had been rather successful in her arrangement of some amateur theatricals, in which she took a leading part. Judging from an old newspaper criticism, she was particularly clever in her impersonation of *Pauline* in Bulwer's charming play "The Lady of Lyons;" and remembering this, Mrs. Morisson, after mature reflection, resolved upon applying for an engagement at one of the Metropolitan theatres. All she wanted was sufficient to keep the wolf from the door; but even this was difficult for one in her position to obtain. Application after application failed—it was the same story everywhere—the same question, "What have you done?" the same answer, "Nothing." Her courage almost failed her; but one chance remained. Her landlady, who had once been on speaking terms with a famous low comedian, when he, like Mrs. Morisson, was struggling for an opportunity to be seen and heard of the great British public, managed to get her an introduction to the manager of the Parnassus, the great Mr. Wingham. That gentleman listened to Mrs. Morisson's narrative of her misfortunes and sufferings, and out of pure good nature gave her an engagement to go on in the third row of the ballet in an extravaganza that was just then hitting the taste of the town. Underlined in the bills, however, and advertised in every newspaper in London, was "a new play by Charles Halkin, Esq., in three acts, entitled 'In Fetters,' founded upon real incidents;" and the gentlemen who purvey gossip to the journals further informed the public that the principal female character would be performed by Mrs. Ferdinand Rook, who was devoting her whole time to the study of the part written expressly for her.

For her services at the Parnassus Mrs. Morisson received eighteen shillings weekly, upon which she and her little family managed to exist. She had heard through the newspapers of Halkin's success, but was too proud to go to him and make him aware of her position. Now that her husband was dead she could love him honestly and truly, and she prayed every night and morning that he might continue his prosperous career unchecked, and marry a woman who would be worthy of him in all respects. But for herself—she never expected to be regarded by him other than as a friend, if indeed they ever met again.

Halkin had never relaxed his endeavours to discover the whereabouts of Mrs. Morisson, for whom he felt the same love as when he first knew her; he had remained heart-whole in the midst of temptation. The incidents in the career of her husband had had such a powerful impression upon him that he had made them the basis of a story on which to found the play that was now in rehearsal, and which was to excite all London.

The time drew on for the production of the new piece, for which the most extensive preparations had been made. New scenery of Baymouth and its prison-establishment had been painted by the principal artists: new dresses designed especially for the occasion; and the celebrated Mrs. Ferdinand Rook was engaged for the principal part. The rehearsals had gone well, and so far everything was propitious. But three days remained before the eventful night on which the new play was to be produced; and Mr. Wingham's horror may therefore be easily imagined when, on the day of the last rehearsal but two of "In Fetters," the company waited hour after hour for the arrival of Mrs. Rook, and when, just as the manager was getting into a hansom to drive off to her residence at Chelsea, a messenger came in with the news that the lady had been taken suddenly ill with rheumatic fever, and was ordered to be kept in the strictest quiet for a month!

The intelligence fell like a thunderbolt upon manager and company. There was no one in London or out of London who could adequately perform the *rôle*, more especially as there remained hardly three days to study the part. The author was summoned, and came down to the house with a face as white as the ghost in "Hamlet." Upon the success of this piece perhaps his whole future depended. Would no one else undertake the part? Not at such short notice, certainly not: it was impossible to get off the lines in two days; and there was the novel "business" to invent and study.

Author and manager, surrounded by the bewildered company, were lamenting their hard fate, and the positive cruelty of Mrs. Rook to be taken ill at this juncture, when from the outside of the circle came the word—

"Allow me to pass and see the author. Perhaps he may be induced to allow *me* to take the part."

A loud roar of laughter followed this appeal, but the manager asked who it was that had spoken, and ordered the company to let the lady approach.

"Where is the author?" she gasped, as she staggered through the throng. "Tell him Margaret ——"

He turned hastily round as she spoke, and with a sobbing, yet withal joyful cry, she fell into his outstretched arms.

"My darling!" he whispered in her ear—"And is it really your dear self come to life again? Let me look at you, hear you speak, see that it is my own Margaret!"

She turned her tearful face to his, and as he kissed away her tears, she told him of her engagement at the theatre, and of her determination, if no one else were selected, to play the part which was vacant by Mrs. Rook's illness. She was confident she could impersonate it; was it not in a great measure the story of her own life, and could she not realise the situation in which the heroine was placed as well as, perhaps better than, anyone else? She felt certain she could play it satisfactorily if they would only permit her to make the attempt.

The company, rather staggered at this unrehearsed incident, fell back, silently watching the scene.

At the earnest request of Halkin, the manager, who saw a way out of the difficulty in this offer of Mrs. Morisson to play the part intended for Mrs. Rook, gave his consent, and, escorted by Charlie, Mrs. Morisson was driven off to her humble lodgings in the Waterloo-road, and set about studying the dialogue with an assiduity that augured well for her success.

The first rehearsal with the new actress went well, the second better, the last splendidly, and author and manager were in ecstacies.

The night came for the performance of the new piece. A house crowded to the ceiling testified the interest which was taken in the new play, and as it proceeded the plaudits of the audience increased. The drama abounded in strong "situations" and what we now call "sensational" effects; and the new actress so thoroughly identified herself with the author's creation, that, when the curtain fell on the last act the applause was deafening, and, in obedience to an unanimous call, Mrs. Morisson, led on by the principal actor and the manager, appeared. Then came loud cries for the author, and that gentleman, who hardly knew whether he was standing on his head or his heels, joined the *débutante* who had made such a genuine success. The curtain fell again amidst enthusiastic bravos and hand-clappings.

The story connected with the new piece somehow or other got into the papers, and author and actress were for a time the hero and heroine of the day; and on the centenary of the production of "In Fetters," a highly complimentary paragraph appeared to the effect that on the previous day were celebrated at St. Aloysius's Church, Belgravia, the nuptials of Charles Halkin, Esq., and Mrs. Margaret Morisson, the charming actress, whose beauty and professional ability were only equalled by the blameless purity of her domestic life.

SNAPDRAGON:

CHRISTMAS EVE IN ENGLAND.

If we were asked to define the compound term "snapdragon," we should say it is a word apparently meaning little or nothing, but in reality signifying a great deal. Snapdragon! What does it not include? A cluster of happy children, their faces beaming with joy; tail-coated young gentlemen, and young ladies with flowing robes; a happy father at the head of the table; the gas lowered until a weird, mysterious, half-light is obtained; and, above everything else in importance, a large dish flaring with SNAPDRAGON! Nothing less than small capitals will adequately represent the world of meaning that lies in and about the word. Italics are well enough in ordinary cases—for printing the names of newspapers, &c., though why they should be used for that purpose is as puzzling as the decapitation trick performed by the Wizard of the North. SNAPDRAGON! What would Christmas be without it? Positively not Christmas at all. The eve of the great Festival would seem like any other night were there no charger full of brandy and raisins, no darkened room, no eager hands stretching across the table clutching the burning mass, no merry voices shouting with childish glee, burning their faces, scorching their hands, and making a kind of Vesuvius and Etna combined of their mouths! Look at the blue flame licking up the potent spirit in the dish, and hissing and cracking in its furious delight; see how, as glass after glass of brandy is poured into the charger, which is for ever yawning for more, just as you remember poor little Oliver did at the Workhouse, where you may be sure there was never anything approaching the semblance of snapdragon—it was all "dragon" and no "snap"—the liquid flame rises and rises, making the charm grow madder. Isn't it in "Der Frieschütz" that a magic circle is made, and an incantation muttered over all manner of curling snakes and adders? Don't you recollect how in "Macbeth" the witches stand round the cauldron and chant their terrible lay—

> Double, double, toil and trouble;
> Fire burn, and cauldron bubble!

Snapdragon would have delighted even the weird Sisters, who were always asking people such an uncomfortable question as—

> "When shall we three meet again?"

and answering for themselves, entirely on their own account—

> "In thunder, lightning, and in rain."

Indeed, snapdragon is so English an entertainment that it amuses everybody. Mr. Lawson, from whose admirable sketch our picture is engraved, must have attended a great many of these symposia before he caught such a characteristic group as that which he has delineated. Look at the young scamp who has burnt his mouth, but is rather pleased than otherwise at the discovery that there is a blister on his tongue as large as a shilling! And the girls looking into the blue-flamed liquid, half afraid, half anxious, to grab some of the fruit! Look at baby in her grand new dress, her head not reaching up to the top of the table; observe the young lady—the eldest sister probably—gazing down at the snapdragon as though she saw in it a face she dreams of! Watch those two boys, and the father at the head of the table. And remark the pair of happy lovers "in the deep shadow" on the right of the picture—they and the well-grown girl opposite, with the flower in her hair, who has too evidently inspired the boy next her with a hopeless passion (as girls will do sometimes, you know), are the only people in the room whose ideas soar beyond snapdragon! That youth, with his hand on his snowy shirt front, would like to join in the fun, but (he thinks) what would *she* say? Ay, there's the rub. The elders, who have passed the rubicon, have the advantage of "young men of the day" in this particular instance; and depend upon it no one will blame us for playing at snapdragon with the children, while by so doing we may increase the happiness of those little ones.

IN THE STORM.

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

A white sail on a hazy sea,
  Ragged shimmering sheen,
Blood-red tints from the setting sun,
  Sea-birds skimming between:
Skimming between the ragged light,
  Storm-clouds shuddering by:
The master! Would he were safe in port—
  Safe with Willie and I!

See how fierce the tempest bursts;
  Oh, Willie, Willie dear!
The thunder's crash resounds afar;
  It is a night of fear.
The clouds have gone into the sea,
  There is nor moon nor sun,
The lifeboat men are on the beach,
  I hear a signal gun.

He'll never come again, my boy,
  As he came to thee and me,
When he kissed us both this morning,
  Before he sailed the sea,
Before we watched it mount the wave,
  His boat the Mary Ann—
Hist, my son! What's that in the surf?
  'Tis he! A drowned, dead man!

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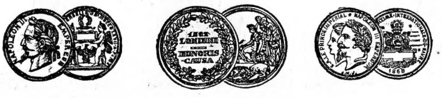

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COLMAN'S BRITISH CORN-FLOUR

PREPARED FROM RICE.

TESTIMONIALS.

FROM EDWIN LANKESTER, M.D., F.R.S.,

" Medical Officer of Health, St. James's, Westminster, &c., &c."

" Rice-Flour is Corn-Flour, and I regard this preparation of Messrs. Colman's as superior to anything of the kind now before the public.

FROM ARTHUR HILL HASSALL, M.D.,

" Author of ' Food and its Adulterations, ' Adulterations Detected,' and other works, &c., &c."

" I find it to be perfectly pure, and most carefully manufactured ; it forms an exceedingly digestible and wholesome article of diet.

FROM CHARLES A. CAMERON, M.D.,

" Professor of Hygiene in the Royal College of Surgeons, Analyst to the City of Dublin, &c., &c."

" I have never tasted anything of the kind more agreeable in flavour or so easily digested.

FROM SHERIDAN MUSPRATT, M.D., &c.,

" Professor at the Liverpool College of Chemistry."

" I can highly recommend it as a palatable and very digestible and nutritious food.

THE English word corn is derived from the Saxon or German word *korn*, and originally meant any round, small, hard body, like a seed, but is now generally employed to designate all the seeds used in making bread or cakes—such as wheat, oats, maize, barley, rye, rice, &c. In the most limited application of this term we find it used simply in connection with the particular grain which forms the staple breadstuff of the people. For example, in Scotland and Ireland, corn in popular *parlance* means the grain of the oat, in the United States the term is applied to *maize* seed, while in England wheat, barley, and oats are collectively called corn.

Flour made from corn contains far more nutritious matter than is present in an equal weight of any kind of flesh, fowl, or fish. In 100 parts of lean beef or mutton there are 74 parts of water, whilst 100 parts of rice flour contain only 13 or 14 parts of water. Indeed, it is pretty certain that a large proportion of the 26 per cent. of dry matter found in meat is indigestible, whilst there is good reason to believe that every particle of prepared rice farina is capable of being assimilated by animals.

As an article of food, RICE—the food of three hundred millions (300,000,000) of people—possesses advantages over the other cereal grains. It is richer in the fat-forming elements of nutrition ; it is easily digested, and is the least *heating* of the farinaceous foods. The recent remarkable advances in animal physiology have led us to regard the fat formers (non-nitrogenous matters) as the most important of the food principles. *Now RICE CORN contains a larger proportion of fat-forming materials than any other grain, and therefore in the present condition of physiological science it must be assigned the highest place amongst the farinaceous foods.*

In Dr. Cameron's *Lectures on the Preservation of Health* the composition of Rice is given as follows:—

Water	14·00
Flesh-formers	5·50
Fat-formers	76·50
Woody Fibre	2·50
Ash	1·50
	100·00

No food is more easily digestible than RICE ; this has been established by the strictest scientific evidence. Dr. Beaumont drew up a table showing the relative degrees of digestibility possessed by various kinds of food. At the very head of this list he places RICE, the digestion of which occupies only *one hour*. We extract the following from Dr. Beaumont's table:—

TIME OCCUPIED IN THE DIGESTION OF FOODS.

FOOD.	PREPARATION.	HRS.	MIN.
Rice	boiled	1	0
Sago	,,	1	35
Lean rare Beef	roasted	3	0
Fresh Mutton	boiled	3	0
Wheat Bread	baked	3	15
Pork Steak	broiled	3	15
Duck, Domestic	roasted	4	0
Cabbage	boiled	4	30
Pork, fat and lean	roasted	5	15

The structure of the RICE seed is very delicate, and the flour which it contains is remarkable for its fineness and beauty of colour. No grain admits of being reduced to so fine a state of division as RICE, and hence this corn is the best adapted for the preparation of an easily-digestible and highly-nutritious Corn-flour.

For years past J. and J. Colman have been engaged in experiments having for their object the production of a Corn-flour superior to any kind at present offered to the British public, and they have succeeded in producing one which fully answers their expectations and wishes—from RICE. The crude matters which exist in every description of corn, and of which portions are allowed to remain in ordinary flour, are carefully eliminated from their Corn-flour.

They therefore strongly recommend it as a most suitable food for persons suffering from the various forms of dyspepsia, or from feeble digestive powers. No other farinaceous aliment is so easily digested, and it may be partaken of late at night, so little does its assimilation to the body interfere with the faculty of sleep.

Colman's British Corn-flour is superior to ordinary preparations as a food for invalids, delicate persons, and children ; and possesses great advantages over arrowroot, tapioca, and various other amylaceous foods.

Corn-flours prepared from wheat maize, or Indian corn, and other grains rich in nitrogen, contain a large proportion of gluten and albumen—substances difficult of digestion. Flour made from wheat, oats, or maize consists essentially of gluten and starch, but if the greater part of the starch were removed the highly glutenous residue would be, if made into bread, tough, unpalatable, and difficult of digestion, *Colman's British Corn-flour* contains less gluten than is found in the other kinds of Corn-flour, and therefore the preparations of it are lighter and more digestible, while, as already shown, they are non-irritating, and are abundantly nutritious.

Arrow-root, sago, and tapioca are frequently used as a substitute for Corn-flour, because they are so easily digested, owing to their lightness, their mildness, and their freedom from gluten, and other nitrogenous matters. But these substances are not perfect foods. They cannot form lean flesh, or muscle, nerve, brain, or bone. They are only convertible into fat, and are used for the purpose of maintaining the internal heat of the body. An animal would soon perish from starvation if fed only on arrow-root, sago, or tapioca.

In its properties *Colman's British Corn-flour* may be regarded as intermediate between the ordinary breadstuffs of Great Britain and the delicate food starches—arrow-root, &c. It resembles the breadstuffs in containing nitrogenous matters, which are capable of nourishing every part of the body. On the other hand it is like arrow-root—light, delicate, and easy of digestion. *Colman's British Corn-flour* combines in itself all the valuable nutritive properties of the farinaceous bodies, whilst it is altogether free from the dietetic defects which distinguish these two great classes of food. In no other perfect vegetable food is there so large a proportion of actual nutriment ; in no other are the alimental principles in a state so favourable for easy digestion. It has the advantage of being equally suitable for the diet of the strong and healthy, and for that of the weak and sick, It may be used by the very old and the very young ; and it will be found as great a favourite in the *dining-room* as in the *nursery*.

J. and J. Colman have received from medical and scientific men, as well as from many others who have practically tested the truth of the above statement, the strongest expressions of approval ; they have, therefore, the greatest confidence in recommending to the public their *BRITISH CORN-FLOUR*.

TO BE OBTAINED OF ALL GROCERS, DRUGGISTS, &c., in 1 lb., ½ lb., and ¼ lb. PACKAGES.

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